Mamie E. Mount

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IN LEAGUE WITH ISRAEL

A Tale of the Chattanooga Conference

BY

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TO THE EPWORTH LEAGUE.

What Paul was to the Gentiles, may you, the Young Apostle of our Church, become to the Jews. Surely, not as the priest or the Levite have you so long passed them by "on the other side."

Haply, being a messenger on the King's business, which requires haste, you have never noticed their need. But the world sees, and, re-reading an old parable, cries out: "Who is thy neighbor? Is it not even Israel also, in thy midst?"

Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.

—EMERSON.

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In League With Israel.

CHAPTER I.

THE RABBI'S PROTÉGÉ.

T was growing dark in the library, but the old rabbi took no notice of the fact. As the June twilight deepened, he unconsciously bent nearer the great volume on the table before him, till his white beard lay on the open page.

He was reading aloud in Hebrew, and his deep voice filled the room with its musical intonations: "Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens."

He raised his head and glanced out toward the western sky. A star or two twinkled through the fading afterglow. Pushing the book aside, he walked to the open window and looked up.

There was a noise of children playing on the pavement below, and the rumbling of an electric

car in the next street. A whiff from a passing cigar floated up to him, and the shrill whistle of a newsboy with the evening paper.

But Abraham at the door of his tent, Moses in the Midian desert, Elijah by the brook Cherith, were no more apart from the world than this old rabbi at this moment.

He saw only the star. He heard only the inward voice of adoration, as he stood in silent communion with the God of his fathers.

His strong, rugged features and white beard suggested the line of patriarchs so forcibly, that had a robe and sandals been substituted for the broadcloth suit he wore, the likeness would have been complete.

He stood there a long time, with his lips moving silently; then suddenly, as if his unspoken homage demanded voice, he caught up his violin. Forty years of companionship had made it a part of himself.

The depth of his being that could find no expression in words, poured itself out in the passionately reverent tones of his violin.

In such exalted moods as this it was no earthly instrument of music. It became to him a veritable Jacob's ladder, on which he heard

the voices of the angels ascending and descending, and on whose trembling rounds he climbed to touch the Infinite.

There was a quick step on the stairs, and a heavy tread along the upper hall. Then the portiere was pushed aside and a voice of the world brought the rhapsody to a close.

"Where are you, Uncle Ezra? It is too dark to see, but your fiddle says that you are at home."

"Ah, David, my boy, come in and strike a light. I wondered why you were so late."

"I was out on my wheel," answered the young man. "Cycling is warm work this time of year."

He lighted the gas and threw himself lazily down among the pile of cushions on the couch.

"I had a letter from Marta to-day."

"And what does the little sister have to say?" answered the rabbi, noticing a frown deepening on David's forehead. "I suppose her vacation has commenced, and she will soon be on her way home again."

"No," answered David, with a still deeper frown. "She has changed all her plans, and wants me to change mine, just to suit the Her-

rick family. She has gone to Chattanooga with them, and they are up on Lookout Mountain. She wants me to meet her there and spend part of the summer with her. She grows more infatuated with Frances Herrick every day. You know they have been inseparable friends since they first started to kindergarten."

"Why did she go down there without consulting you?" asked the old man impatiently. "You should be both father and mother to her, now that neither of your parents is living. I wish I were really your uncle and hers, that I might have some authority. You must be more careful of her, my boy. She should spend this summer with you at home, instead of with strangers in a hotel."

"But, Uncle Ezra," protested David, quick to excuse the little sister, who was the only one in the world related to him by family ties, "at home there is nobody but the housekeeper. Mrs. Herrick is with the girls now, and the major will join them next week. Marta is just like one of the family, and I have encouraged the intimacy, because I felt that Mrs. Herrick gives her the motherly care she needs. Besides, Marta and Frances are so congenial in every way that

they find their greatest happiness together. I tell them they are as bad as Ruth and Naomi. It is a case of 'where thou goest I will go,' etc."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the rabbi, fervently. "Do you remember that the rest of that declaration is, 'Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God?' David, my son, I tell you there is great danger of the child's being led away from the faith. Your father and hers was my dearest friend. I have loved you children like my own. You must heed my warning, and discourage such intimacy with a Gentile family, especially when it includes such an agreeable member as that young Albert Herrick."

"Why, he is only a boy, Uncle Ezra."

"Yes, but he is older than Marta, and they are thrown constantly together."

David looked down at the carpet, and began absently tracing a pattern with his foot. He was thinking of the little sixteen-year-old sister. The seven years' difference in their ages gave him a fatherly feeling for her. He could not bear the thought of interfering seriously with her pleasure, yet he could not ignore the old man's warning.

Rabbi Barthold had been his tutor in both

languages and music. Aside from a few years at college, all that he knew had been learned under the old man's wise supervision.

"Ezra, my friend," said the elder David, when he lay dying, "take my child and make him a man after your own pattern. I know your noble soul. Give his the same strength and sweetness. We are so greedy for the flesh-pots of Egypt, that we forget to satisfy the soul hunger. But you will teach the little fellow higher things."

Later, when the end had almost come, his hand groped out feebly towards the child, who had been brought to his bedside.

"Never mind about the shekels, little David," he said in a hoarse, broken whisper. "But clean hands and a pure heart—that 's all that counts when you 're in your coffin."

The child's eyes grew wide with wonder as a paroxysm of pain contracted the beloved face. He was led quickly away, but those words were never forgotten.

The rabbi was thinking of them now as he studied the handsome features of the young fellow before him.

It was a strong face, but refinement and

gentleness showed in every line. There was something so boyish and frank, also, in its expression, that a tender smile moved the rabbi's lips. "Clean hands and a pure heart," he said fondly to himself. "He has them. Ah, my David, if thou couldst but see how thy little one has grown, not only in stature, but in soul-life, in ideals, thou would'st be satisfied."

"Well," he said aloud, as the young man left his seat and began to walk up and down the room with his hands in his pockets, "what are you going to do?"

"I scarcely know," was the hesitating answer. "It would not be wise to send for Marta to come home, for the reason you suggest, and I have no other to offer her."

"Then go to her!" the rabbi exclaimed. "You need not tell her that you have any fear of her being influenced by Gentile society—but never for a moment let her forget that she is a Jewess. Kindle her pride in her race. Teach her loyalty to her people, and love for all that is Hebrew."

"But my Hudson Bay trip?" David suggested.

"That can wait. The Tennessee mountains

will give you as good a summer outing as you need, and you can play guardian angel for Marta while you take it."

David laughed, and took another turn across the room. Then he paused beside the table, and picked up a newspaper.

"I wonder what connections the trains make now," he said. "There used to be a long wait at a dismal old junction." He glanced hastily over the time-table.

"Why, look here!" he exclaimed. "Here is a cheap excursion to Chattanooga this next week. I could afford to run down and see Marta, anyhow. Maybe I could persuade her to come back with me, if I promised to take her to Hudson Bay with me."

"What kind of an excursion?" asked the rabbi.

"Epworth League, it says here, whatever that may be. It seems to be some sort of an international convention, and says to apply to Frank B. Marion for particulars."

"Marion," repeated the rabbi, thoughtfully. "O, then it is a Methodist affair. He is not only the head and shoulders of that big Church on Garrison Avenue, but hands and feet as well,

judging by the way he works for it. I wish my congregation would take a few lessons from him."

"Is he very tall, with a short, brown beard, and blue eyes, and a habit of shaking hands with everybody?" asked David. "I believe I know the man. I met him on the cars last fall. He 's lively company. I 've a notion to hunt him up, and find what 's going on."

"Telephone out to Hillhollow that you will not be at home to-night," said the rabbi, "and stay in the city with me. If you conclude to go to Chattanooga next week, I have much to say to you before taking leave of you for the summer."

"Very well," consented David. "I 'll go down town immediately, and see if I can find this Mr. Marion. What is his business, do you know?"

"A wholesale shoe merchant, I believe. He is in that big new building next to Cohen's furniture-store, on Duke Street. But you 'll not find him Wednesday night. They have Church in the middle of the week, and he is one of the few Christians whose life is as loud as his profession."

David smiled a little bitterly. "Then I shall certainly cultivate his acquaintance for the purpose of studying such a rara avis. It has never been my lot to know a Christian who measured up to his creed."

"Do not grow cynical, my lad," answered the old man, gently. "I have made you a dreamer like myself. I have kept you in an atmosphere of high ideals. I have led you into the companionship of all that was heroic in the past, and held you apart as much as possible from the sordid selfishness of the age. O, I grow sick at heart sometimes when I stroll through the great centers of trade, watching the fierce struggle of humanity as they snatch the bread from other mouths to feed their own.

"You remember our Hebrew word for teach comes from tooth, and means to make sharp like a tooth. Sometimes I think that primitive idea has become the popular view of education in this day. Anything that will fit a man to bite and cut his way through this hungry wolf-pack is what is sought after, no matter how many of his kind are trampled under foot in the struggle. I am almost afraid for you to step down from the place where I have kept you. When you

are thrown with men who care for nothing but material things, who would barter not only their birthrights but their souls for a mess of pottage, I am afraid you will lose faith in humanity."

"That is quite likely, Uncle Ezra."

"Aye, but I would not have it so, David. The world is certainly growing a little less savage, and in every nature smolders some spark, however small, of the eternal good. No matter how we have fallen, we still bear the imprint of the Creator, in whose likeness we were first fashioned."

Rabbi Barthold had been right in calling himself a dreamer. The ability to live apart from his surroundings, had been his greatest comfort. Because of it, the rigor of extreme poverty that surrounded his early life had not touched his heart with its baneful chill. He had gone through the world a happy optimist.

He had been trained according to the most strictly orthodox system of Judaism. But even its severe pressure had failed to confine him to the limits of such a narrow mold.

He was still a dreamer. In the new world he had cast aside the shackles of tradition for the larger liberty of the Reformed Jew.

Now in his serene old age, surrounded by luxuries, he still lived apart in a world of music and literature.

His congregation, broken loose from the old moorings, drifted dangerously away towards radicalism, but he stood firm in the belief that the "chosen people" would finally triumph over all error, and found much comfort in the thought.

David took out his watch. "It is after eight o'clock," he said. "Probably if I walk down Garrison Avenue, I may meet Mr. Marion coming from Church. I 'll be back soon."

People were beginning to file out of the side entrance that led to the prayer-meeting room, by the time he reached the church.

"Is Mr. Frank Marion in here?" he asked of the colored janitor, who was standing in the doorway.

"Yes, sah!" was the emphatic response. "He sut'n'y is, sah! He am always the fust to come, an' the last to depaht."

"Why, good evening, Mr. Herschel," exclaimed a pleasant voice.

David turned quickly to lift his hat. An elderly lady was coming down the steps with

two young girls. She came up to him with a smile, and held out her hand.

"I have not seen you since you came back from college," she said, cordially; "but I never lose my interest in any of Rob's playmates."

"Thank you, Mrs. Bond," he replied, with his hat still in his hand.

As she passed on, a swift rush of recollection brought back the big attic where he had passed many a rainy day with Rob Bond. He recalled with something of the old boyish pleasure a certain jar on their pantry shelf, where the most delicious ginger-snaps were always to be found.

But the next moment the smile left his lips, as an exclamation of one of the girls was carried back to him. It was made in an undertone, but the still evening air transmitted it with startling distinctness.

"Why, Auntie, he 's a Jew! I did n't think you would shake hands with a Jew!"

He could not hear Mrs. Bond's reply. He drew himself up haughtily. Then the indignant flash died out of his eyes. After all, why should he, with the princely blood of Israel in his veins, care for the callow prejudices of a little schoolgirl?

A crowd of people passed out, laughing and talking. Then he saw Mr. Marion come into the vestibule with several boys, just as the janitor began to extinguish the lights.

He turned to David with a hearty smile and a strong hand-clasp, recognizing him instantly.

"How are you, brother?" he asked. He spoke with a slight Southern accent. Somehow, David felt forcibly that it was not merely as a matter of habit that Frank Marion called him brother. Such a warm, personal interest seemed to speak through the friendly blue eyes looking so honestly into his own, that he was half-way persuaded to go to Chattanooga with him before a word had been said on the subject. They walked several blocks together up the avenue, discussing the excursion. Then Mr. Marion stopped at the gate of an old-fashioned residence, built some distance back from the street.

"I have a message to deliver to Miss Hallam, a cousin of mine," he said. "If you will wait a moment, I 'll go with you over to the office."

The front door stood open, and the hall-lamp sent a flood of yellow light streaming out into the warm, June darkness.

In response to Mr. Marion's knock, there was a flutter of a white dress in the hall, and the next instant the massive old doorway framed a picture that the young Jew never forgot. It was Bethany Hallam. The light seemed to make a halo of her golden hair, and to illuminate her dress and the sweet upturned face with such an ethereal whiteness that David was reminded of a Psyche in Parian marble.

"Who is she?" he exclaimed, as Mr. Marion rejoined him. "One never sees a face like that outside of some artist's conception. It is too spirituelle for this planet, but too sad for any other."

"She is Judge Hallam's daughter," Mr. Marion responded. "He died last fall, and Bethany is grieving herself to death. I have at last persuaded her to go to Chattanooga with us. She needs to have her thoughts turned into another channel, and I hope this trip will accomplish that purpose."

"I knew the Judge," said David. "I met him a number of times after I was admitted to the bar."

"O, I did n't know you were a lawyer," said Mr. Marion.

"Yes, I expect to begin practicing here after vacation," he answered.

"Well, I am going to begin my practice right now," said Mr. Marion, laughing, "and plead my case to such purpose that you will be persuaded to take this Chattanooga trip." He slipped his arm through David's, and drew him around the corner toward his store.

CHAPTER II.

"ON TO CHATTANOOGA."

IT was within three minutes of time for the south-bound train to start when David Herschel swung himself on the platform of the Chattanooga special. As he settled himself comfortably in the first vacant seat, Mr. Marion hurried past him down the aisle with a valise in each hand. He was followed by two ladies. The first one seemed to know every one in the car, judging by the smiles and friendly voices that greeted her apearance.

"O, we were so afraid you were not coming, Mrs. Marion," cried an impulsive young girl, just in front of David. "It would have been such a disappointment. Is n't she just the dearest thing in the world?" she rattled on to her companion, as Mrs. Marion passed out of hearing.

"Well, if she has n't got Bethany Hallam with her! Of all people to go on an excursion, it seems to me she would be the very last."

"Why?" asked the other girl. As that was the question uppermost in David's mind, he listened with interest for the answer.

"O, she seems so different from other people. Her father always used to treat her as if she were made of a little finer clay than ordinary mortals. When she traveled, it was always in a private car. When she went to lectures or concerts, they always had the best seats in the house. All her teachers taught her at home except one. She went to the conservatory for her drawing lessons, but a maid came with her in the morning, and her father drove by for her at noon."

As he listened, David's eyes had followed the tall, graceful girl who was now seating herself by Mrs. Marion.

Every movement, as well as every detail of her traveling dress, impressed him with a sense of her refinement and culture. He noticed that she was all in black. A thin veil drawn over her face partially concealed its delicate pallor; but her soft, light hair, drawn up under the little black hat she wore, seemed sunnier than ever by contrast.

"Is n't she beautiful?" sighed David's talk-

ative neighbor. "I used to wish I could change places with her, especially the year when she went abroad to study art; but I would n't now for anything in the world."

"Why?" asked her companion again, and David mentally echoed her interrogation.

"O, because her father is dead now, and everything is so different. Something happened to their property, so there 's nothing left but the old home. Then her little brother had such a dreadful fall just after the Judge's death. They thought he would die, too, or be a cripple all his life; but I believe he 's better now. He is sort of paralyzed, so he has to stay in a wheel-chair; but the doctor says he is gradually getting over that, and will be all right after awhile. It 's a very peculiar case, I 've heard. There have only been a few like it. She is studying stenography now, so that she can keep on living in the old home and take care of little Jack."

"Do you know her?" interrupted the interested listener.

"No, not very well. I 've always seen her in Church; you know Judge Hallam was one of our best paying members, and rarely missed a

Sabbath morning service. But they were very exclusive socially. My easel stood next to hers in the art conservatory one term, and we talked about our work sometimes. She used to remind me of Sir Christopher in 'Tales of a Wayside Inn.' Do n't you remember? She had that

> 'Way of saying things
> That made one think of courts and kings,
> And lords and ladies of high degree,
> So that not having been at court
> Seemed something very little short
> Of treason or lese-majesty,
> Such an accomplished knight was he.'"

Both girls laughed, and then the lively chatter was drowned by the jarring rumble of the train as it puffed slowly out of the depot.

"Any one would know this is a Methodist crowd," said Mrs. Marion laughingly, as a dozen happy young voices began to sing an old revival hymn, and it was caught up all over the car.

"That reminds me," said her husband, reaching into his coat pocket, "I have something here that will prevent any mistake if doubt should arise."

He drew out a little box of ribbon badges and a paper of pins. "Here," he said, "put one

on, Ray; we must all show our colors this week. You, too, Bethany."

"O no, Cousin Frank," she protested. "I am not a member of the League."

"That makes no difference," he answered, in his hearty, persistent way. "You ought to be one, and you will be by the time you get back from this conference."

"But, Cousin Frank, I never wore a badge in my life," she insisted. "I have always had the greatest antipathy to such things. It makes one so conspicuous to be branded in that way."

He held out the little white ribbon, threaded with scarlet, and bearing the imprint of the Maltese cross. The light, jesting tone was gone. He was so deeply in earnest that it made her feel uncomfortable.

"Do you know what the colors mean, Bethany?" Then he paused reverently. "The purity and the blood! Surely, you can not refuse to wear those."

He laid the little badge in her lap, and passed down the aisle, distributing the others right and left.

She looked at it in silence a moment, and then pinned it on the lapel of her traveling coat.

"Cousin Ray, did you ever know another such persistent man?" she asked. "How is it that he can always make people go in exactly the opposite way from the one they had intended? When he first planned for me to come on this excursion, I thought it was the most preposterous idea I ever heard of. But he put aside every objection, and overruled every argument I could make. I did not want to come at all, but he planned his campaign like a general, and I had to surrender."

"Tell me how he managed," said Mrs. Marion. "You know I did not get home from Chicago until yesterday morning, and I have been too busy getting ready to come on this excursion to ask him anything."

"When he had urged all the reasons he could think of for my going, but without success, he attacked me in my only vulnerable spot, little Jack. The child has considered Cousin Frank's word law and gospel ever since he joined the Junior League. So, when he was told that my health would be benefited by the trip, and it would arouse me from the despondent, low-spirited state I had fallen into, he gave me no rest until I promised to go. Jack showed gen-

eralship, too. He waited until the night of his birthday. I had promised him a little party, but he was so much worse that day, it had to be postponed. I was so sorry for him that I could have promised him almost anything. The little rascal knew it, too. While I was helping him undress, he put his arms around my neck, and began to beg me to go. He told me that he had been praying that I might change my mind. Ever since he has been in the League he has seemed to get so much comfort out of the belief that his prayers are always answered that I could n't bear to shake his faith. So I promised him."

"The dear little John Wesley," said Mrs. Marion; "you ought to give him the full benefit of his name, Bethany."

"Mamma did intend to, but papa said it was as much too big for him as the huge old-fashioned silver watch that Grandfather Bradford left him. He suggested that both be laid away until he grew up to fit them."

"Who is taking care of him in your absence?" was the next question.

"O, he and Cousin Frank arranged that, too. They sent for his old nurse. She came last

night with her little nine-year-old grandson. Just Jack's age, you see; so he will have somebody to make the time pass very quickly."

Mrs. Marion stopped her with an exclamation of surprise. "Well, I wish you 'd look at Frank! What will he do next? He is actually pinning an Epworth League badge on that young Jew!"

Bethany turned her head a little to look. "What a fine face he has!" she remarked. "It is almost handsome. He must feel very much out of place among such an aggressive set of Christians. I wonder what he thinks of all these songs?"

Mr. Marion came back smiling. As superintendent of both Sunday-school and Junior League, he had won the love of every one connected with them. His passage through the car, as he distributed the badges, was attended by many laughing remarks and warm handclasps.

There was a happy twinkle in his eyes when he stopped beside his wife's seat. She smiled up at him as he towered above her, and motioned him to take the seat in front of them.

"I 'm not going to stay," he said. "I want

to bring a young man up here, and introduce him to you. He 's having a pretty lonesome time, I 'm afraid."

"It must be that Jew," remarked Mrs. Marion. "I know every one else on the car. I do n't see that we are called on to entertain him, Frank. He came with us, simply to take advantage of the excursion rates. I should think he would prefer to be let alone. He must have thought it presumptuous in you to pin that badge on him. What did he say when you did it?"

Mr. Marion bent down to make himself heard above the noise of the train.

"I showed him our motto, 'Look up, lift up,' and told him if there was any people in the world who ought to be able to wear such a motto worthily, it was the nation whose Moses had climbed Sinai, and whose tables of stone lifted up the highest standard of morality known to the race of Adam."

Mrs. Marion laughed. "You would make a fine politician," she exclaimed. "You always know just the right chord to touch."

"Cousin Frank," asked Bethany, "how does it happen you have taken such an intense interest in him?"

He dropped into the seat facing theirs, and leaned forward.

"Well, to begin with, he 's a fine fellow. I have had several talks with him, and have been wonderfully impressed with his high ideals and views of life. But I am free to confess, had I met him ten years ago, I could not have seen any good traits in him at all. I was blinded by a prejudice that I am unable to account for. It must have been hereditary, for it has existed since my earliest recollection, and entirely without reason, as far as I can see. I somehow felt that I was justified in hating the Jews. I had unconsciously acquired the opinion that they were wholly devoid of the finer sensibilities, that they were gross in their manner of living, and petty and mean in business transactions. I took Fagin and Shylock as fair specimens of the whole race. It was, really, a most unaccountable hatred I had for them. My teeth would actually clinch if I had to sit next to one on a street-car. You may think it strange, but I was not alone in the feeling. I know it to be a fact that there are hundreds and hundreds of Church members to-day that have the same inexplicable antipathy."

Bethany looked up quickly.

"My father's reading and training," she said, "has caused me to have a great admiration and respect for Jews in the abstract. I mean such as the Old Testament heroes and the Maccabees of a later date. But in the concrete, I must say I like to have as little intercourse with them as possible. And as to modern Israelites, all I know of them personally is the almost cringing obsequiousness of a few wealthy merchants with whom I have dealt, and the dirty swarm of repulsive creatures that infest the tenement districts. We used to take a short cut through those streets sometimes in driving to the market. Ugh! It was dreadful!" She gave a little shiver of repugnance at the recollection.

"Yes, I know," he answered. "I had that same feeling the greater part of my life. But ten years ago I spent a summer at Chautauqua, studying the four Gospels. It opened my eyes, Bethany. I got a clearer view of the Christ than I ever had before. I saw how I had been misrepresenting him to the world. The inconsistencies of my life seemed like the lanterns the pirates used to hang on the dangerous cliffs

along the coast, that vessels might be wrecked by their misleading light. Do you suppose a Jew could have accepted such a Christ as I represented then? No wonder they fail to recognize their Messiah in the distorted image that is reflected in the lives of his followers."

"But they rejected Christ himself when he was among them," ventured Bethany.

"Yes," answered Mr. Marion, "it was like the old story of the man with a muck rake. Do you remember that picture that was shown to Christian at the interpreter's house in 'Pilgrim's Progress?' As a nation, Israel had stooped so much to the gathering of dry traditions, had bent so long over the minute letter of the law, that it could not straighten itself to take the crown held out to it. It could not even lift its eyes to discern that there was a crown just over its head."

"It always made me think of the blind Samson," said Mrs. Marion. "In trying to overthrow something it could not see, spiritually I mean, it pulled down the pillars of prophecy on its own head."

Mr. Marion turned to Bethany again.

"Yes, Israel, as a nation, rejected Christ;

but who was it that wrote those wonderful chronicles of the Nazarene? Who was it that went out ablaze with the power of Pentecost to spread the deathless story of the resurrection? Who were the apostles that founded our Church? To whom do we owe our knowledge of God and our hope of redemption, if not to the Jews? We forget, sometimes, that the Savior himself belonged to that race we so reproach."

He was talking so earnestly, he had forgotten his surroundings, until a light touch on his shoulder interrupted him.

"What 's the occasion of all this eloquence, Brother Marion?" asked the minister's genial voice.

He turned quickly to smile into the frank, smooth-shaven face bending over him.

"Come, sit down, Dr. Bascom. We 're discussing my young friend back there, David Herschel. Have you met him?"

"Yes, I was talking with him a little while ago," answered the minister. "He seems very reserved. Queer, what an intangible barrier seems to arise when we talk to one of that race. I just came in to tell you that Cragmore is in the next car. He got on at the last station."

"What, George Cragmore!" exclaimed Mr. Marion, rising quickly. "I have n't seen him for two years. I 'll bring him in here, Ray, after awhile."

"That 's the last we 'll see of him till lunch-time," said Mrs. Marion, as the door banged behind the two men.

"Frank will never think of us again when he gets to spinning yarns with Mr. Cragmore. I want you to meet him, Bethany. He is one of the most original men I ever heard talk. He 's a young minister from the 'auld sod.' They called him the 'wild Irishman' when he first came over, he was so fiery and impetuous. There is enough of the brogue left yet in his speech to spice everything he says. He and Frank are a great deal alike in some things. They are both tall and light-haired. They both have a deep vein of humor and an inordinate love of joking. They are both so terribly in earnest with their Christianity that everybody around them feels the force of it; and when they once settle on a point, they are so tenacious nothing can move them. I often tell Frank he is worse than a snapping-turtle. Tradition says they do let go when it thunders, but noth-

ing will make him let go when his mind is once clinched."

There was a stop of twenty minutes at noon. At the sound of a noisy gong in front of the station restaurant, Mr. Marion came in with his friend. Capacious lunch-baskets were opened out on every side, with the generous abundance of an old-time camp-meeting.

"Where is Herschel?" inquired Mr. Marion. "I intended to ask him to lunch with us."

"I saw him going into the restaurant," replied his wife.

"You must have a talk with him this afternoon, George," said Mr. Marion. "I 've been all up and down this train trying to get people to be neighborly. I believe Dr. Bascom is the only one who has spoken to him. They were all having such a good time when I interrupted them, or they did n't know what to say to a Jew, and a dozen different excuses."

"O, Frank, do n't get started on that subject again!" exclaimed Mrs. Marion. "Take a sandwich, and forget about it."

Bethany Hallam laughed more than once during the merry luncheon that followed. She could not remember that she had laughed be-

fore since her father's death. The young Irishman's ready wit, his droll stories, and odd expressions were irresistible. He seemed a magnet, too, drawing constantly from Frank Marion's inexhaustible supply of fun.

"You have seen only one side of him," remarked Mrs. Marion, when her husband had taken him away to introduce David. "While he was very entertaining, I think he has shown us one of the least attractive phases of his character."

David had felt very much out of place all morning. It was one thing to travel among ordinary Gentiles, as he had always done, and another to be surrounded by those who were constantly bubbling over with religious enthusiasm. He did not object to sitting beside a hot-water tank, he said to himself, but he did object to its boiling over on him.

His neighbors would have been very much surprised could they have known he was studying them with keen insight, and finding much to criticise. Even some of their songs were objectionable to him, their catchy refrains reminding him of some he had heard at colored minstrel shows.

With such an exalted idea of worship as the old rabbi had inculcated in him, it did not seem fitting to approach Deity in song unless through such sonorous utterances as the psalms. Some of these little tinkling, catch-penny tunes seemed profanation.

He ventured to say as much to George Cragmore. He had very unexpectedly found a congenial friend in the young minister. It was not often he met a man so keenly alert to nature, so versed in his favorite literature, or of his same sensitive temperament. He felt himself opening his inner doors as he did to no one else but the rabbi.

A drizzling rain was falling when they began to wind in and out among the mountains of Tennessee, and for miles in their journey a rainbow confronted them at every turn in the road. It crowned every hilltop ahead of them. It reached its shining ladder of light into every valley. It seemed such a prophecy of what awaited them on the mountain beyond, that some one began to sing, "Standing on the Promises."

As the full glory of the rainbow flashed on Cragmore's sight, he stopped abruptly in the middle of a sentence. The expression of his face

seemed to transfigure it. When he turned to David, there were tears in his eyes.

"O, the covenants of the Old Testament!" he said, in a low tone, that thrilled David with its intensity of feeling. "The Bethels! The Mizpahs! The Ebenezers! See, it is like a pillar of fire leading us to a veritable land of promise."

Then, with his hand resting on David's knee, he began to talk of the promises of the Bible, till David exclaimed, impulsively: "You make me forget that you are a Christian. You enter into Israel's past even more fully than many of her own sons."

Cragmore thrust out his hand, in his quick, nervous way, with an impetuous gesture.

"Why, man!" he cried, relapsing unconsciously into the broad brogue of his childhood, "we hold sacred with you the heritage of your past. We look up with you to the same God, the Father; we confess a common faith till we stand at the foot of the cross. There is no great barrier between us—only a step—one step farther for you to take, and we stand side by side!"

He laid his hand on David's, and looked into

his eyes with an expression of tender pleading as he added:

"O, my friend, if you could only see my Savior as he has revealed himself to me! I pray you may! I do pray you may!"

It was the first time in David's life any one had ever said such a thing to him. He sat back in his corner of the seat, at loss for an answer. It put an end to their conversation for a while. Cragmore felt that his sympathy had carried him to the point of giving offense. He was relieved when Dr. Bascom beckoned him to share his seat.

After a while, as the train sped on into the darkness, the passengers subsided in to sleepy indifference. It seemed hours afterward when Mr. Marion clapped him on the shoulder, saying briskly, "Wake up, old fellow, we are getting into Chattanooga."

"Let us go in with banners flying," said Dr. Bascom. "I understand that every car-full that has come in, from Maine to Mexico, has come singing."

The lights of the city, twinkling through the car-windows, aroused the sleepy passengers with a sense of pleasant anticipations, and when

they steamed slowly into the crowded depot, it was as "pilgrims singing in the night."

In the general confusion of the arrival, Mr. Marion lost sight of David.

"It 's too bad!" he exclaimed, in a disappointed tone. "I intended to ask him to drive to Missionary Ridge with us to-morrow, and I wanted to introduce him to you, Bethany."

"I 'm very glad you did n't have the opportunity, Cousin Frank," she said, as she followed him through the depot gates. "He may be very agreeable, and all that, but he 's a Jew, and I do n't care to make his acquaintance."

The handle of the umbrella she was carrying came in collision with some one behind her.

"I beg your pardon," she said, turning in her gracious, high-bred way.

The gentleman raised his hat. It was David Herschel. A stylish-looking little schoolgirl was clinging to his arm, and a gray-bearded man, whom she recognized as Major Herrick, was walking just behind him. They had come down from the mountain to meet him, and take him to Lookout Inn. As their eyes met, Bethany was positive that he had overheard her remark.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUNRISE SERVICE ON "LOOKOUT."

BY some misunderstanding, Bethany and her cousins had been assigned to different homes.

"It is too late to make any change to-night," said Mrs. Marion, as they left her. "We are only one block further up on this same street. We will try to make some arrangement to-morrow to have you with us."

Bethany followed her hostess into the wide reception-hall. One of the most elegant homes of the South had opened its hospitable doors to receive them. Ten delegates had preceded her, all as tired and travel-stained as herself.

During the introductions, Bethany mentally classified them as the most uninteresting lot of people she had seen in a long time.

"I believe you are the odd one of this party, Miss Hallam," said the hostess, glancing over the assignment cards she held; "so I shall have to ask you to take a very small room. It is

one improvised for the occasion; but you will probably be more comfortable here alone than in a larger room with several others."

It had never occurred to Bethany that she might have been asked to share an apartment with some stranger, and she hastened to assure her hostess of her appreciation of the little room, which, though very small indeed compared with the great dimensions of the others, was quite comfortable and attractive.

"I have always been accustomed to being by myself," she said, "and it makes no difference at all if it is so far away from the other sleeping-rooms. I am not at all timid."

Yet, when she had wearily locked her door, she realized that she had never been so entirely alone before in all her life. Home seemed so very far away. Her surroundings were so strange. Her extreme weariness intensified her morbid feeling of loneliness. She remembered such a sensation coming to her one night in mid-ocean, but she had tapped on her state-room wall, and her father had come to her immediately. Now she might call a weary lifetime. No earthly voice could ever reach him.

With a throbbing ache in her throat, and

hot tears springing to her eyes, she opened her valise and took out a little photograph case of Russia leather. Four pictured faces looked out at her. She was kneeling before them, with her arms resting on the low dressing-table. As she gazed at them intently, a tear splashed down on her black dress.

"O, it is n't right! It is n't right," she sobbed, passionately, "for God to take everything! It would have been so easy for him to let me keep them. How could he be so cruel? How could he take away all that made my life worth living, and then let little Jack suffer so?"

She laid her head on her arms in a paroxysm of sobbing. Presently she looked up again at her mother's picture. It was a beautiful face, very like her own. It brought back all her happy childhood, that seemed almost glorified now by the remembered halo of its devoted mother-love.

The years had softened that grief, but it all came back to-night with its old-time bitterness.

The next face was little Jack's—a sturdy, wide-awake boy, with mischievous dimples and laughing eyes. But the recollection of all he

had suffered since his accident, made her feel that she had lost him also, in a way. The physician had assured her that he would be the same vigorous, romping child again; but she found that hard to believe when she thought of his present helpless condition.

She pressed the next picture to her lips with trembling fingers, and then looked lovingly into the eyes that seemed to answer her gaze with one of steadfast, manly devotion.

"O, it is n't right! It is n't right!" she sobbed again. How it all came back to her—the happy June-time of her engagement!—the summer days when she dreamed of him, the summer twilights when he came. Every detail was burned into her aching memory, from the first bunch of violets he brought her, to the judge's tender smile when she spread out all her bridal array for him to see. Such shimmering lengths of the white, trailing satin; such filmy clouds of the soft, white veil, destined never to touch her fair hair! For there was the telegram, and afterward the darkened room, and the darker hour, when she groped her way to a motionless form, and knelt beside it alone. O, how she had clung to the cold hands, and

kissed the unresponsive lips, and turned away in an agony of despair! But as she turned, her father's strong arms were folded about her, and his broken voice whispered comfort.

The dear father! It had been doubly desolate since he had gone, too.

Kneeling there, with her head bowed on her arms, she seemed to face a future that was utterly hopeless. Except that Jack needed her, she felt that there was absolutely no reason why she should go on living.

The ticking of her watch reminded her that it was nearly midnight. In a mechanical way, she got up and began to arrange her hair for the night.

After she had extinguished the light, she pulled aside the curtain, and looked out on the unfamiliar streets.

The moon had come up. In the dim light the crest of old Lookout towered grimly above the horizon. A verse of one of the Psalms passed through her mind: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."

"No," she whispered, bitterly, "there is no help. God does n't care. He is too far away."

As she went back to the bed, the words of

the novice in Muloch's "Benedetta Minelli" came to her:

"O weary world, O heavy life, farewell!
Like a tired child that creeps into the dark
To sob itself asleep where none will mark,
So creep I to my silent convent cell."

"I wish I could do that," she thought; "lock myself away with my memories, and not be obliged to keep up this empty pretense of living, just as if nothing were changed. It might not be so hard. How I dread to-morrow, with its crowds of strange faces! O, why did I ever come?"

Next morning, the guests gathered out on the vine-covered piazza to discuss their plans for the day.

There were two theological students from Boston, a young doctor from Texas, and the son of a wealthy Louisiana planter. A Kansas farmer's wife and her sister, a bright little schoolteacher from an Iowa village, and three pretty Georgia girls, completed the party.

Bethany sat a little apart from them, wondering how they could be so greatly interested in such things as the most direct car-line to

Missionary Ridge, or the time it would take to "do" the old battle-grounds.

The youngest Georgia girl was about her own age. She had made several attempts to include Bethany in the conversation, but mistaking her reserve and indifference for haughtiness, turned to the Louisiana boy with a remark about unsociable Northerners.

Their frequent laughter reached Bethany, and she wondered, in a dull way, how anybody could be light-hearted enough even to smile in such a world full of heart-aches. Then she remembered that she had laughed herself, the day before, when Mr. Cragmore was with them. It rather puzzled her now to know how she could have done so. Her wakeful night had left her unusually depressed.

An open, two-seated carriage stopped at the gate. Mrs. Marion and George Cragmore were on the back seat. Mr. Marion and Dr. Bascom sat with the driver. Bethany had been waiting for them some time with her hat on, so she went quickly out to meet them. Mr. Cragmore leaped over the wheel to open the gate, and assist her to a seat between himself and Mrs. Marion.

They drove rapidly out towards Missionary Ridge. To Bethany's great relief, neither of her companions seemed in a talkative mood. Mr. Marion, who was an ardent Southener, had been deep in a political discussion with Dr. Bascom. As they stopped on the winding road, half way up the ridge, to look down into the beautiful valley below, and across to the purple summit of Lookout, Mr. Marion drew a long breath. Then he took off his hat, saying, reverently, "The work of His fingers! What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" Then, after a long silence: "How insignificant our little differences seem, Bascom, in the sight of these everlasting hills! Let 's change the subject."

Mrs. Marion, absorbed in the beauty on every side, did not notice Bethany's continued silence or Cragmore's spasmodic remarks. The fresh air and brisk motion had somewhat aroused Bethany from her apathy. First, she began to be interested in the constantly-changing view, and then she noticed its effect on the erratic man beside her.

From the time they commenced to ascend the ridge he had not spoken to any one directly,

but everything he saw seemed to suggest a quotation. He repeated them unconsciously, as if he were all alone; some of them dreamily, some of them with startling force, and all with the slight brogue he spoke so musically.

"Every common bush afire with God," he murmured in an undertone, looking at a dusty wayside weed, with his soul in his eyes.

Bethany thought to herself, afterwards, that if any other man of her acquaintance had kept up such a steady string of disjointed quotations, it would have been ridiculous. She never heard him do it again after that day. It seemed as if the old battle-fields suggested thoughts that could find no adequate expression save in words that immortal pens had made deathless.

The warm odor of ripe peaches floated out to them from grassy orchards, where the trees were bent over with their wealth of velvety, sun-reddened fruit. Seemingly, Cragmore had taken no notice of Bethany's depression when she joined them, or of the soothing effect nature was having on her sore heart. But she knew that he had seen it, when he turned to her abruptly with a quotation that fitted her as well as his first one had the wayside weed. He

half sang it, with a tender, wistful smile, as he watched her face.

"O the green things growing, the green things growing—
The faint, sweet smell of the green things growing!
I should like to live, whether I smile or grieve,
Just to watch the happy life of my green things growing,
For by many a tender touch, they comfort me so much,
With the soft, mute comfort of green things growing."

Bethany wondered if her cousin Frank had told him of all she had suffered, or if he had guessed it intuitively. Somehow she felt that he had not been told, but that he had divined it. Yet when they stopped on the Chickamauga battle-field, and she saw him go leaping across the rough fields like an overgrown boy, she thought of her cousin Ray's remark, "They used to call him the wild Irishman," and wondered at the contradictory phases his character presented. She saw him pause and lay his hand reverently on the largest cannon, and then come running back across the furrows with long, awkward jumps.

"What on earth did you do that for, Crag-

more?" asked Mr. Marion, in his teasing way. "The idea of keeping us waiting while you were racing across a ten-acre lot to pat an old gun."

"Old gun, is it?" was the laughing answer, yet there was a flash in his eyes that belied the laugh. "Odds, man! it is one of the greatest orators that ever roused a continent. I just wanted to lay my hands on its dumb lips." He waved his arm with an exulting gesture. "Aye, but they spoke in thunder-tones once, the day they spoke freedom to a race."

He did not take his seat in the carriage for a while, but followed at a little distance, ranging the woods on both sides; sometimes plunging into a leafy hollow to examine the bark of an old tree where the shells had plowed deep scars; sometimes dropping on his knees to brush away the leaves from a tiny wild-flower, that any one but a true woodsman would have passed with unseeing eyes. Once he brought a rare specimen up to the carriage to ask its name. He had never seen one like it before. That was the only one he gathered.

"It 's a pity to tear them up, when they would wither in just a few hours," he said; "the solitary places are so glad for them."

"He 's a queer combination," said Dr. Bascom, as he watched him break a little sprig of cedar from the stump of a battle-broken tree to put in his card-case. "Sometimes he is the veriest clown; at others, a child could not be more artless; and I have seen him a few times when he seemed to be aroused into a spiritual giant. He fairly touched the stars."

Bethany was so tired by the morning's drive that she did not go to the opening services in the big tent that afternoon.

"Well, you missed it!" said Mr. Marion, when he came in after supper, "and so did David Herschel."

"Missed what?" inquired Bethany.

"The mayor's address of welcome, this afternoon. You know he is a Jew. Such a broad, fraternal speech must have been a revelation to a great many of his audience. I tell you, it was fine! You 're going to-night, are n't you, Bethany?"

"No," she answered, "I want to save myself for the sunrise prayer-meeting on the mountain to-morrow. I saw the sun come up over the Rigi once. It is a sight worth staying up all night to see."

It was about two o'clock in the morning when they started up the mountain by rail. The cars were crowded. People hung on the straps, swaying back and forth in the aisles, as the train lurched around sudden curves. Nothwithstanding the early hour, and the discomfort of their position, they sang all the way up the mountain.

"Cousin Ray," said Bethany, "do tell me how these people can sing so constantly. The last thing I heard last night before I went to sleep was the electric street-car going past the house, with a regular hallelujah chorus on board. Do you suppose they really feel all they sing? How can they keep worked up to such a pitch all the time?"

"You should have been at the tent last night, dear," answered Mrs. Marion. "Then you would have gotten into the secret of it. There is an inspiration in great numbers. The audiences we are having there are said to be the greatest ever gathered south of the Ohio. Our League at home has been doing very faithful work, but I could n't help wishing last night that every member could have been present. To see ten thousand faces lit up with the same

interest and the same hope, to hear the battle-cry, 'All for Christ,' and the Amen that rolled out in response like a volley of ten thousand musketry, would have made them feel like a little, straggling company of soldiers suddenly awakened to the fact that they were not fighting single-handed, but that all that great army were re-enforcing them. More than that, these were only the advance-guard, for over a million young people are enlisted in the same cause. Think of that, Bethany—a million leagued together just in Methodism! Then, when you count with them all the Christian Endeavor forces, and the Baptist Unions, and the King's Daughters and Sons, and the Young Men's Christian Associations, and the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, it looks like the combined power ought to revolutionize the universe in the next decade."

"Then you think it is an inspiration of the crowds that makes them sing all the time," said Bethany.

"By no means!" answered Mrs. Marion. "To be sure, it has something to do with it; but to most of this vast number of young people, their religion is not a sentiment to be fanned into spasmodic flame by some excitement. It

is a vital force, that underlies every thought and every act. They will sing at home over their work, and all by themselves, just as heartily as they do here. I remember seeing in Westminster Abbey, one time, the profiles of John and Charles Wesley put side by side on the same medallion. I have thought, since then, it is only a half-hearted sort of Methodism that does not put the spirit of both brothers into its daily life—that does not wing its sermons with its songs."

Hundreds of people had already gathered on the brow of the mountain, waiting the appointed hour. Mr. Marion led the way to a place where nature had formed a great amphitheater of the rocks. They seated themselves on a long, narrow ledge, overlooking the valley. They were above the clouds. Such billows of mist rolled up and hid the sleeping earth below that they seemed to be looking out on a boundless ocean. The world and its petty turmoils were blotted out. There was only this one gray peak raising its solitary head in infinite space. It was still and solemn in the early light. They spoke together almost in whispers.

"I can not believe that any man ever went up into a mountain to pray without feeling him-

self drawn to a higher spiritual altitude," said Dr. Bascom.

Frank Marion looked around on the assembled crowds, and then said slowly:

"Once a little band of five hundred met the risen Lord on a mountain-side in Galilee, and were sent away with the promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway!' Think what they accomplished, and then think of the thousands here this morning that may go back to the work of the valley with the same promise and the same power! There ought to be a wonderful work accomplished for the Master this year."

Cragmore, who had walked away a little distance from the rest, and was watching the eastern sky, turned to them with his face alight.

"See!" he cried, with the eagerness of a child, and yet with the appreciation of a poet shining in his eyes; "the wings of the morning rising out of the uttermost parts of the sea."

He pointed to the long bars of light spreading like great flaming pinions above the horizon. The dawn had come, bringing a new heaven and a new earth. In the solemn hush of the sunrise, a voice began to sing, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

It was as in the days of the old temple. They had left the outer courts and passed up into an inner sanctuary, where a rolling curtain of cloud seemed to shut them in, till in that high Holy of Holies they stood face to face with the Shekinah of God's presence.

Bethany caught her breath. There had been times before this when, carried along by the impetuous eloquence of some sermon or prayer, every fiber of her being seemed to thrill in response. In her childlike reaching out towards spiritual things, she had had wonderful glimpses of the Fatherhood of God. She had gone to him with every experience of her young life, just as naturally and freely as she had to her earthly father. But when beside the judge's death-bed she pleaded for his life to be spared to her a little longer, and her frenzied appeals met no response, she turned away in rebellious silence. She would pray no more to a dumb heaven," she said bitterly. Her hope had been vain.

Now, as she listened to songs and prayers and testimony, she began to feel the power that emanated from them,—the power of the Spirit, showing her the Father as she had never known

him before: the Father revealed through the Son.

Below, the mists began to roll away until the hidden valley was revealed in all its morning loveliness. But how small it looked from such a height! Moccasin Bend was only a silver thread. The outlying forests dwindled to thickets.

Bethany looked up. The mists began to roll away from her spiritual vision, and she saw her life in relation to the eternities. Self dwindled out of sight. There was no bitterness now, no childish questioning of Divine purposes. The blind Bartimeus by the wayside, hearing the cry, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," and, groping his way towards "the Light of the world," was no surer of his dawning vision than Bethany, as she joined silently in the prayer of consecration. She saw not only the glory of the June sunrise; for her the "Sun of righteousness had arisen, with healing in his wings."

People seemed loath to go when the services were over. They gathered in little groups on the mountain-side, or walked leisurely from one point of view to another, drinking in the rare beauty of the morning.

Bethany walked on without speaking. She was a little in advance of the others, and did not notice when the rest of her party were stopped by some acquaintances. Absorbed in her own thoughts, she turned aside at Prospect Point, and walked out to the edge. As she looked down over the railing, the refrain of one of the songs that had been sung so constantly during the last few days, unconsciously rose to her lips. She hummed it softly to herself, over and over, "O, there 's sunshine in my soul to-day."

So oblivious was she of all surroundings that she did not hear Frank Marion's quick step behind her. He had come to tell her they were going down the mountain by the incline.

"O, there 's sunshine, blessed sunshine!" The words came softly, almost under her breath; but he heard them, and felt with a quick heart-throb that some thing unusual must have occurred to bring any song to her lips.

"O Bethany!" he exclaimed, "do you mean it, child? Has the light come?"

The face that she turned towards him was radiant. She could find no words wherewith to tell him her great happiness, but she laid her

hands in his, and the tears sprang to her eyes.

"Thank God! Thank God!" he exclaimed, with a tremor in his strong voice. "It is what I have been praying for. Now you see why I urged you to come. I knew what a mountain-top of transfiguration this would be."

Standing on the outskirts of the crowd, David Herschel had looked around with great curiosity on the gathering thousands. It was only a little distance from the inn, and he had come down hoping to discover the real motive that had brought these people together from such vast distances. He wondered what power their creed contained that could draw them to this meeting at such an early hour.

He had felt as keenly as Cragmore the sublimity of the sunrise. He felt, too, the uplifting power of the old hymn, that song drawn from the experience of Jacob at Bethel, that seemed to lift every heart nearer to the Eternal.

He was deeply stirred as the leader began to speak of the mountain scenes of the Bible, of Abraham's struggles at Moriah, of Horeb's burning bush, of Sinai and Nebo, of Mount Zion with its thousand hallowed memories. So

far the young Jew could follow him, but not to the greater heights of the Mountain of Beatitudes, of Calvary, or of Olivet.

He had never heard such prayers as the ones that followed. Although there can be found no sublimer utterances of worship, no humbler confessions of penitence or more lofty conceptions of Jehovah, than are bound in the rituals of Judaism, these simple outpourings of the heart were a revelation to him.

There came again the fulfillment of the deathless words, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me!" O, how the lowly Nazarene was lifted up that morning in that great gathering of his people! How his name was exalted! All up and down old Lookout Mountain, and even across the wide valley of the Tennessee, it was echoed in every song and prayer.

When the testimony service began, David turned from one speaker to another. What had they come so far to tell? From every State in the Union, from Canada, and from foreign shores, they brought only one story—"Behold the Lamb of God!" In spite of himself, the young Jew's heart was strangely drawn

to this uplifted Christ. Suddenly he was startled by a ringing voice that cried: "I am a converted Jew. I was brought to Christ by a little girl—a member of the Junior League. I have given up wife, mother, father, sisters, brothers, and fortune, but I have gained so much that I can say from the depths of my soul, 'Take all the world, but give me Jesus.' I have consecrated my life to his service."

David changed his position in order to get a better view of the speaker. He scrutinized him closely. He studied his face, his dress, even his attitude, to determine, if possible, the character of this new witness. He saw a man of medium height, broad forehead, and firm mouth over which drooped a heavy, dark mustache. There was nothing fanatical in the calm face or dignified bearing. His eyes, which were large, dark, and magnetic, met David's with a steady gaze, and seemed to hold them for a moment.

With a lawyer-like instinct, David longed to probe this man with questions. As he went back to the inn, he resolved to hunt up his history, and find what had induced him to turn away from the faith.

CHAPTER IV.

AN EPWORTH JEW.

NEARLY every northern-bound mail-train, since Bethany's arrival in Chattanooga, had carried something home to Jack—a paper, a postal, souvenirs from the battle-fields, or views of the mountain. Knowing how eagerly he watched for the postman's visits, she never let a day pass without a letter. Saturday morning she even missed part of the services at the tent in order to write to him.

"I have just come back from Grant University," she wrote. "Cousin Frank was so interested in the Jew who spoke at the sunrise meeting yesterday, because he said a little Junior League girl had been the means of his conversion, that he arranged for an interview with him. His name is Lessing. Cousin Frank asked me to go with him to take the conversation down in shorthand for the League. I

have n't time now to give all the details, but will tell them to you when I come home."

Bethany had been intensely interested in the man's story. They sat out on one of the great porches of the university, with the mountains in sight. They had drawn their chairs aside to a cool, shady corner, where they would not be interrupted by the stream of people constantly passing in and out.

"It is for the children you want my story," he said; "so they must know of my childhood. It was passed in Baltimore. My father was the strictest of orthodox Jews, and I was very faithfully trained in the observances of the law. He taught me Hebrew, and required a rigid adherence to all the customs of the synagogue."

Bethany rapidly transcribed his words, as he told many interesting incidents of his early home life. He had come to Chattanooga for business reasons, married, and opened a store in St. Elmo, at the foot of Mount Lookout. He was very fond of children, and made friends with all who came into the store. There was one little girl, a fair, curly-haired child, who used to come oftener than the others. She grew to love him dearly, and, in her baby fashion,

often talked to him of the Junior League, in which she was deeply interested.

Her distress when she discovered that he did not love Christ was pitiful. She insisted so on his going to Church, that one morning he finally consented, just to please her. The sermon worried him all day. It had been announced that the evening service would be a continuation of the same subject. He went at night, and was so impressed with the truth of what he heard, that when the child came for him to go to prayer-meeting with her the next week, he did not refuse.

Towards the close of the service the minister asked if any one present wished to pray for friends. The child knelt down beside Mr. Lessing, and to his great embarrassment began to pray for him. "O Lord, save Brother Lessing!" was all she said, but she repeated it over and over with such anxious earnestness, that it went straight to his heart.

He dropped on his knees beside her, and began praying for himself. It was not long until he was on his feet again, joyfully confessing the Christ he had been taught to despise. In the enthusiasm of this new-found happiness

he went home and tried to tell his wife of the Messiah he had accepted, but she indignantly refused to listen. For months she berated and ridiculed him. When she found that not only were tears and arguments of no avail, but that he felt he must consecrate his life to the ministry, she declared she would leave him. He sold the store, and gave her all it brought; and she went back to her family in Florida.

In order to prepare for the ministry he entered the university, working outside of study hours at anything he could find to do. In the meantime he had written to his parents, knowing how greatly they would be distressed, yet hoping their great love would condone the offense.

His father's answer was cold and business-like. He said that no disgrace could have come to him that could have hurt him so deeply as the infidelity of his trusted son. If he would renounce this false faith for the true faith of his fathers, he would give him forty thousand dollars outright, and also leave him a legacy of the same amount. But should he refuse the offer, he should be to him as a stranger—the

doors of both his heart and his house should be forever barred against him.

His mother, with a woman's tact, sent the pictures of all the family, whom he had not seen for several years. Their faces called up so many happy memories of the past that they pleaded more eloquently than words. It was a sweet, loving letter she wrote to her boy, reminding him of all they had been to each other, and begging him for her sake to come back to the old faith. But right at the last she wrote: "If you insist on clinging to this false Christ, whom we have taught you to despise, the heart of your father and of your mother must be closed against you, and you must be thrust out from us forever with our curse upon you."

He knew it was the custom. He had been present once when the awful anathema was hurled at a traitor to the faith, withdrawing every right from the outlaw, living or dead. He knew that his grave would be dug in the Jewish cemetery in Baltimore; that the rabbi would read the rites of burial over his empty coffin, and that henceforth his only part in the family life would be the blot of his disgraceful memory.

He spread the pictures and the letters on the desk before him. A cold perspiration broke out on his forehead, as he realized the hopelessness of the alternative offered him. One by one he took up the photographs of his brothers and sisters, looked at them long and fondly, and laid them aside; then his father's, with its strong, proud face. He put that away, too.

At last he picked up his mother's picture. She looked straight out at him, with such a world of loving tenderness in the smiling eyes, with such trustful devotion, as if she knew he could not resist the appeal, that he turned away his head. The trial seemed greater than he could bear. He was trembling with the force of it. Then he looked again into the dear, patient face, till his eyes grew too dim to see. It was the same old mother who had nursed him, who had loved him, who had borne with his waywardness and forgiven him always. He seemed to feel the soft touch of her lips on his forehead as she bent over to give him a good-night kiss. All that she had ever done for him came rushing through his memory so overwhelmingly that he broke down utterly, and began to sob like a child. "O, I can't give her

up," he groaned. "My dear old mother! I can't grieve her so!"

All that morning he clung to her picture, sometimes walking the floor in his agony, sometimes falling on his knees to pray. "God in heaven have pity," he cried. "That a man should have to choose between his mother and his Christ!" At last he rose, and, with one more long look at the picture, laid it reverently away with shaking hands. He had surrendered everything.

He did not tell all this to his sympathizing listeners. They could read part of the pathos of that struggle in his face, part in the voice that trembled occasionally, despite his strong effort to control it.

Frank Marion's thoughts went back to his own gentle mother in the old homestead among the green hills of Kentucky. As he thought of the great pillar of strength her unfaltering faith had been to him, of how from boyhood it had upheld and comforted and encouraged him, of how much he had always depended upon her love and her prayers, his sympathies were stirred to their depths. He reached out and took Lessing's hand in his strong grasp.

"God help you, brother!" he said, fervently.

Bethany turned her head aside, and looked away into the hazy distances. She knew what it meant to feel the breaking of every tie that bound her best beloved to her. She knew what it was to have only pictured faces to look into, and lay away with the pain of passionate longing. The question flashed into her mind, could she have made the voluntary surrender that he had made? She put it from her with a throb of shame that she was glad that she had not been so tested.

Some acquaintance of Mr. Marion, passing down the steps, recognized him, and called back:

"What time does your speech come on the program, Frank? I understand you are to hold forth to-day."

Mr. Marion hastily excused himself for a moment, to speak to his friend.

Bethany sat silent, thinking intently, while she drew unmeaning dots and dashes over the cover of her note-book.

Mr. Lessing turned to her abruptly. "Did you ever speak to a Jew about your Savior?" he asked, with such startling directness, that Bethany was confused.

"No," she said, hesitatingly.

"Why?" he asked.

He was looking at her with a penetrating gaze that seemed to read her thoughts.

"Really," she answered, "I have never considered the question. I am not very well acquainted with any, for one reason; besides, I would have felt that I was treading on forbidden grounds to speak to a Jew about religion. They have always seemed to me to be so intrenched in their beliefs, so proof against argument, that it would be both a useless and thankless undertaking."

"They may seem invulnerable to arguments," he answered, "but nobody is proof against a warm, personal interest. Ah, Miss Hallam, it seems a terrible thing to me. The Church will make sacrifices, will cross the seas, will overcome almost any obstacle to send the gospel to China or to Africa, anywhere but to the Jews at their elbows. O, of course, I know there are a few Hebrew missions, scattered here and there through the large cities, and a few earnest souls are devoting their entire energy to the work. But suppose every Christian in the country became an evangel to the little

community of Jews within the radius of his influence. Suppose a practical, prayerful, individual effort were made to show them Christ, with the same zeal you expend in sending 'the old story' to the Hottentots. What would be the result? O, if I had waited for a grown person to speak to me about it, I might have waited until the day of my death. I was restless. I was dissatisfied. I felt that I needed something more than my creed could give me. For what is Judaism now? I read an answer not long ago: 'A religion of sacrifice, to which, for eighteen centuries, no sacrifice has been possible; a religion of the Passover and the Day of Atonement, on which, for well-nigh two millenniums, no lamb has been slain and no atonement offered; a sacerdotal religion, with only the shadow of a priesthood; a religion of a temple which has no temple more; its altar is quenched, its ashes scattered, no longer kindling any enthusiasm, nor kindled by any hope.'* No man ever took me by the hand and told me about the peace I have now. No man ever shared with me his hope, or pointed out the way for me to find it. If it had not been for the

*Archdeacon Farrar.

blessed guiding influence of a little child, my hungry heart might still be crying out unsatisfied."

He went on to repeat several conversations he had had with men of his own race, to show her how this indifference of Christians was reckoned against them as a glaring inconsistency by the Jews. Almost as if some one had spoken the words to her, she seemed to hear the condemnation, "I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in. Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me."

Strange as it may seem, Bethany's interpretation of that Scripture had always been in a temporal sense. More than once, when a child, she had watched her mother feed some poor beggar, with the virtuous feeling that that condemnation could not apply to the Hallam family. But now Lessing's impassioned appeal had awakened a different thought. Who so hungered as those who, reaching out for bread, grasped either the stones of a formal ritualism or the abandoned hope of prophecy unfulfilled? Who such "strangers within the gates" of the

nations as this race without a country? From the brick-kilns of Pharaoh to the willows of Babylon, from the Ghetto of Rome to the fagot-fires along the Rhine, from Spanish cruelties to English extortions, they had been driven—exiles and aliens. The New World had welcomed them. The New World had opened all its avenues to them. Only from the door of Christian society had they turned away, saying, "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in."

In the pause that followed, Bethany's heart went out in an earnest prayer: "O God, in the great day of thy judgment, let not that condemnation be mine. Only send me some opportunity, show me some way whereby I may lead even one of the least among them to the world's Redeemer!"

Mr. Marion came back from his interview, looking at his watch as he did so. It was so near time for services to begin at the tent, that he did not resume his seat.

"We may never meet again, Mr. Lessing," said Bethany, holding out her hand as she bade him good-bye. "So I want to tell you before I go, what an impression this conversation has made upon me. It has aroused an earnest de-

sire to be the means of carrying the hope that comforts me, to some one among your people."

"You will succeed," he said, looking into her earnest upturned face. Then he added softly, in Hebrew, the old benediction of an olden day—"Peace be unto you."

All that day, after the sunrise meeting, David Herschel had been with Major Herrick, going over the battle-fields, and listening to personal reminiscences of desperate engagements. A monument was to be erected on the spot where nearly all the major's men had fallen in one of the most hotly-contested battles of the war. He had come down to help locate the place.

"It 's a very different reception they are giving us now," remarked the major, as they drove through the city.

Epworth League colors were flying in all directions. Every street gleamed with the white and red banners of the North, crossed with the white and gold of the South.

"Chattanooga is entertaining her guests royally; people of every denomination, and of no faith at all, are vying with each other to show the kindliest hospitality. We are missing

it by being at the hotel. I told Mrs. Herrick and the girls I would meet them at the tent this evening. Will you come, too?"

"No, thank you," replied David, "my curiosity was satisfied this morning. I 'll go on up to the inn. I have a letter to write."

The major laughed.

"It 's a letter that has to be written every day, is n't it?" he said, banteringly. "Well, I can sympathize with you, my boy. I was young myself once. Conferences are n't to be taken into account at all when a billet-doux needs answering."

The next day David kept Marta with him as much as possible. He could see that she was becoming greatly interested, and catching much of Albert Herrick's enthusiasm. The boy was a great League worker, and attended every meeting.

David took Marta a long walk over the mountain paths. They sat on the wide, vine-hung veranda of the inn, and read together. Then, as it was their Sabbath, he took her up to his room, and read some of the ritual of the day, trying to arouse in her some interest for the old customs of their childhood.

To his great dismay, he found that she had drifted away from him. She was not the yielding child she had been, whom he had been able to influence with a word.

She showed a disposition to question and contend, that annoyed him. The rabbi was right. She had been left too long among contaminating influences.

It was with a feeling of relief that he woke Sunday morning to hear the rain beating violently against the windows. He was glad on her account that the storm would prevent them going down into the city. But toward evening the sun came out, and Frances Herrick began to insist on going down to the night service in the tent.

"It is the last one there will be!" she exclaimed. "I would n't miss it for anything."

"Neither would I," responded Marta. "There is something so inspiring in all that great chorus of voices."

When David found that his sister really intended to go, notwithstanding his remonstrances, and that the family were waiting for her in the hall below, he made no further protest,

but surprised her by taking his hat, and tucking her hand in his arm.

"Then I will go with you, little sister," he said. "I want to have as much of your company as possible during my short visit."

Albert Herrick, who was waiting for her at the foot of the stairs, divined David's purpose in keeping his sister so close. He lifted his eyebrows slightly as he turned to take his mother's wraps, leaving Frances to follow with the major.

The tent was crowded when they reached it. They succeeded with great difficulty in obtaining several chairs in one of the aisles.

"Herschel and I will go back to the side," said Albert. "The audience near the entrance is constantly shifting, and we can slip into the first vacant seat; some will be sure to get tired and go out before long. They always do."

It was the first time David had been in the tent, and he was amazed at the enormous audience. He leaned against one of the side supports, watching the people, still intent on crowding forward. Suddenly his look of idle curiosity changed to one of lively interest. He recognized the face of the Jew who had at-

tracted him in the mountain meeting. Isaac Lessing was in the stream of people pressing slowly towards him.

Nearer and nearer he came. The crowd at the door pushed harder. The fresh impetus jostled them almost off their feet, and in the crush Lessing was caught and held directly in front of David. Some magnetic force in the eyes of each held the gaze of the other for a moment. Then Lessing, recognizing the common bond of blood, smiled.

That ringing cry, "I am a converted Jew," had sounded in David's ears ever since it first startled him. He felt confident that the man was laboring under some strong delusion, and he wished that he might have an opportunity to dispel it by skillful arguments, and win him back to the old faith.

Seized by an impulse as sudden as it was irresistible, he laid his hand on the stranger's arm.

"I want to speak with you," he said, hurriedly, and in a low tone. "Come this way. I will not detain you long."

He drew him out of the press into one of the side aisles, and thence towards the exit.

"Will you walk a few steps with me?" he asked; "I want to ask you several questions."

Lessing complied quietly.

The sound of a cornet followed them with the pleading notes of an old hymn. It was like the mighty voice of some archangel sounding a call to prayer. Then the singing began. Song after song rolled out on the night air across the common to a street where two men paced back and forth in the darkness. They were arm in arm. David was listening to the same story that Bethany and Frank Marion had heard the day before. He could not help but be stirred by it. Lessing's voice was so earnest, his faith was so sure. When he was through, David was utterly silenced. The questions with which he had intended to probe this man's claims were already answered.

"We might as well go back," he said at last. As they walked slowly towards the tent, he said: "I can't understand you. I feel all the time that you have been duped in some way; that you are under the spell of some mysterious power that deludes you."

Just as they passed within the tent, the

cornet sounded again, the great congregation rose, and ten thousand voices went up as one:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall!"

The sight was a magnificent one; the sound like an ocean-beat of praise. Lessing seized David's arm.

"That is the power!" he exclaimed. "Not only does it uplift all these thousands you see here, but millions more, all over this globe. It is nearly two thousand years since this Jesus was known among men. Could he transform lives to-night, as mine has been transformed, if his power were a delusion? What has brought them all these miles, if not this same power? Look at the class of people who have been duped, as you call it." He pointed to the platform. "Bishops, college presidents, editors, men of marked ability and with world-wide reputation for worth and scholarship."

At the close of the hymn some one moved over, and made room for David on one of the benches. Lessing pushed farther to the front. David listened to all that was said with a sort of pitying tolerance, until the sermon

began. The bishop's opening words caught his attention, and echoed in his memory for months afterward.

"Paul knew Christ as he had studied him, and as he appeared to him when he did not believe in him—when he despised him. Then he also knew Christ after his surrender to him; after Christ had entered into his life, and changed the character of his being; after new meanings of life and destiny filled his horizon, after the Divine tenderness filled to completeness his nature; then was he in possession of a knowledge of Christ, of an experience of his presence and of his love that was a benediction to him, and has through the centuries since that hour been a blessing to men wherever the gospel has been preached.

"It is such a man speaking in this text. A man with a singularly strong mind, well disciplined, with great will-power; a man with a great ancestry; a man with as mighty a soul as ever tabernacled in flesh and blood. He proclaimed everywhere that, if need be, he was ready to die for the principles out of which had come to him a new life, and which had brought to his heart experiences so rich and so over-

whelming in happiness, that he was led to do and undertake what he knew would lead at the last to a martyr's death and crown. Why? Hear him: 'For the love of Christ constraineth us.' "

There was a testimony service following the sermon. As David watched the hundreds rising to declare their faith, he wondered why they should thus voluntarily come forward as witnesses. Then the text seemed to repeat itself in answer, "For the love of Christ constraineth us!"

He dreamed of Lessing and Paul all night. He was glad when the conference was at an end; when the decorations were taken down from the streets, and the last car-load of irrepressible enthusiasts went singing out of the city.

Albert Herrick went to the seashore that week. David proposed taking Marta home with him; but her objections were so heartily reenforced by the whole family that he quietly dropped the subject, and went back to Rabbi Barthold alone.

CHAPTER V.

"TRUST."

"Alas! we can not draw habitual breath in the thin air of life's supremer heights. We can not make each meal a sacrament."—Lowell.

IT had seemed to Bethany, in the experience of that sunrise on Lookout Mountain, she could never feel despondent again; but away from the uplifting influences of the place, back among the painful memories of the old home, she fought as hard a fight with her returning doubts as ever Christian did in his Valley of Humiliation.

For a week since her return the weather had been intensely warm. It made Jack irritable, and sapped her own strength.

There came a day when everything went wrong. She had practiced her shorthand exercises all morning, until her head ached almost beyond endurance. The grocer presented a bill much larger than she had expected. While he

was receipting it, a boy came to collect for the gas, and there were only two dimes left in her purse. Then Jack upset a little cut-glass vase that was standing on the table beside him. It was broken beyond repair, and the water ruined the handsome binding of a borrowed book that would have to be replaced.

About noon Dr. Trent called to see Jack. He had brought a new kind of brace that he wanted tried.

"It will help him amazingly," he said, "but it is very expensive."

Bethany's heart sank. She thought of the pipes that had sprung a leak that morning, of the broken pump, and the empty flour-barrel. She could not see where all the money they needed was to come from.

"It 's too small," said the doctor, after a careful trial of the brace. "The size larger will be just the thing. I will bring it in the morning."

He wiped his forehead wearily as he stopped on the threshold.

"A storm must be brewing," he remarked. "It is so oppressively sultry."

It was not many hours before his predic-

tion was verified by a sudden windstorm that came up with terrific force. The trees in the avenue were lashed violently back and forth until they almost swept the earth. Huge limbs were twisted completely off, and many were left broken and hanging. It was followed by hail and a sudden change of temperature, that suggested winter. The roses were all beaten off the bushes, their pink petals scattered over the soaked grass. The porch was covered with broken twigs and wet leaves.

As night dropped down, the trees bordering the avenue waved their green, dripping boughs shiveringly towards the house.

"How can it be so cold and dreary in July?" inquired Jack. "Let 's have a fire in the library and eat supper there to-night."

Bethany shivered. It had been the judge's favorite room in the winter, on account of its large fireplace, with its queer, old-fashioned tiling. She rarely went in there except to dust the books or throw herself in the big arm-chair to cry over the perplexities that he had always shielded her from so carefully. But Jack insisted, and presently the flames went leaping up the throat of the wide chimney, filling the room

with comfort and the cheer of genial companionship.

"Look!" cried Jack, pointing through the window to the bright reflection of the fire in the garden outside. "Don't you remember what you read me in 'Snowbound?'

> 'Under the tree,
> When fire outdoors burns merrily,
> There the witches are making tea.'

This would be a fine night for witch stories. The wind makes such queer noises in the chimney. Let 's tell 'em after supper, all the awful ones we can think of, 'specially the Salem ones."

As usual, Jack's wishes prevailed. Afterward, when Bethany had tucked him snugly in bed, and was sitting alone by the fire, listening to the queer noises in the chimney, she wished they had not dwelt so long on such a grewsome subject. She leaned back in her father's great arm-chair, with her little slippered feet on the brass fender, and her soft hair pressed against the velvet cushions. Her white hands were clasped loosely in her lap; small, helpless looking hands, little fitted to cope with the burdens and responsibilities laid upon her.

The judge had never even permitted her to open a door for herself when he had been near enough to do it for her. But his love had made him short-sighted. In shielding her so carefully, he did not see that he was only making her more keenly sensitive to later troubles that must come when he was no longer with her. Every one was surprised at the course she determined upon.

"I supposed, of course," said Mrs. Marion, "that you would try to teach drawing or water-colors, or something. You have spent so much time on your art studies, and so thoroughly enjoy that kind of work. Then those little dinner-cards, and german favors you do, are so beautiful. I am sure you have any number of friends who would be glad to give you orders."

"No, Cousin Ray," answered Bethany decidedly; "I must have something that brings in a settled income, something that can be depended on. While I have painted some very acceptable things, I never was cut out for a teacher. I 'd rather not attempt anything in which I can never be more than third-rate. I 've decided to study stenography. I am sure I can master that, and command a first-class

position. I have heard papa complain a great many times of the difficulty in obtaining a really good stenographer. Of the hundreds who attempt the work, such a small per cent are really proficient enough to undertake court reporting."

"You 're just like your father," said Mrs. Marion. "Uncle Richard would never be anything if he could n't be uppermost."

It had been nearly a year since that conversation. Bethany had persevered in her undertaking until she felt confident that she had accomplished her purpose. She was ready for any position that offered, but there seemed to be no vacancies anywhere. The little sum in the bank was dwindling away with frightful rapidity. She was afraid to encroach on it any further, but the bills had to be met constantly.

Presently she drew her chair over to the library table, and spread out her check-book and memoranda under the student-lamp, to look over the accounts for the month just ended. Then she made a list of the probable expenses of the next two months. The contrast between their needs and their means was appalling.

"It will take every cent!" she exclaimed, in a distressed whisper. "When the first of Sep-

tember comes, there will be nothing left but to sell the old home and go away somewhere to a strange place."

The prospect of leaving the dear old place, that had grown to seem almost like a human friend, was the last drop that made the day's cup of misery overflow. The old doubt came back.

"I wonder if God really cares for us in a temporal way?" she asked herself.

The frightful tales of witchcraft that Jack had been so interested in, recurred to her. Many of the people who had been so fearfully tortured and persecuted as witches were Christians. God had not interfered in their behalf, she told herself. Why should he trouble himself about her?

She went back to her seat by the fender, and, with her chin resting in her hand, looked drearily into the embers, as if they could answer the question. She heard some one come up on the porch and ring the bell. It was Dr. Trent's quick, imperative summons.

"Jack in bed?" he asked, in his brisk way, as she ushered him into the library. "Well, it makes no difference; you know how to adjust

the brace anyway. He will be able to sit up all day with that on."

He gave an appreciative glance around the cheerful room, and spread his hands out towards the fire.

"Ah, that looks comfortable!" he exclaimed, rubbing them together. "I wish I could stay and enjoy it with you. I have just come in from a long drive, and must answer another call away out in the country. You 'd be surprised to find how damp and chilly it is out to-night."

"I venture you never stopped at the boarding-house at all," answered Bethany, "and that you have not had a mouthful to eat since noon. I am going to get you something. Yes, I shall," she insisted, in spite of his protestations. Luckily, Jack wanted the kettle hung on the crane to-night, so that he could hear it sing as he used to. "The water is boiling, and you shall have a cup of chocolate in no time."

Before he could answer, she was out of the room, and beyond the reach of his remonstrance. He sank into a big chair, and laying his gray head back on the cushions, wearily closed his eyes. He was almost asleep when Bethany came back.

"The fire made me drowsy," he said, apologetically. "I was quite exhausted by the intense heat of this morning. These sudden changes of temperature are bad for one."

"Why, my child!" he exclaimed, seeing the heavy tray she carried, "you have brought me a regular feast. You ought not to have put yourself to such trouble for an old codger used to boarding-house fare."

"All the more reason why you should have a change once in a while," said Bethany, gayly, as she filled the dainty chocolate-pot.

The sight of the doctor's face as she entered the room had almost brought the tears. It looked so worn and haggard. She had not noticed before how white his hair was growing, or how deeply his face was lined.

He had been such an intimate friend of her father's that she had grown up with the feeling that some strong link of kinship certainly existed between them. She had called him "Uncle Doctor" until she was nearly grown. He had been so thoughtful and kind during all her troubles, and especially in Jack's illness, that she longed to show her appreciation by some of

the tender little ministrations of which his life was so sadly bare.

"This is what I call solid comfort," he remarked, as he stretched his feet towards the fire and leisurely sipped his chocolate. "I did n't realize I was so tired until I sat down, or so hungry until I began to eat." Then he added, wistfully, "Or how I miss my own fireside until I feel the cheer of others'."

The doubts that had been making Bethany miserable all evening, and that she had forgotten in her efforts to serve her old friend, came back with renewed force.

"Does God really care?" she asked herself again. Here was this man, one of the best she had ever known, left to stumble along under the weight of a living sorrow, the things he cared for most, denied him.

"Baxter Trent is one of the world's heroes," she had heard her father say.

There were two things he held dearer than life—the honor of the old family name that had come down to him unspotted through generations, and his little home-loving wife. For fifteen years he had experienced as much of the

happiness of home-life as a physician with a large practice can know. Then word came to him from another city that his only brother had killed a man in a drunken brawl, and then taken his own life, leaving nothing but the memory of a wild career and a heavy debt. He had borrowed a large amount from an unsuspecting old aunt, and left her almost penniless.

When Dr. Trent recovered from the first shock of the discovery, he quietly set to work to wipe out the disgraceful record as far as lay in his power, by assuming the debt. He could eradicate at least that much of the stain on the family name. It had taken years to do it. Bethany was not sure that it was yet accomplished, for another trial, worse than the first, had come to weaken his strength and dispel his courage.

The idolized little wife became affected by some nervous malady that resulted in hopeless insanity.

Bethany had a dim recollection of the doctor's daughter, a little brown-eyed child of her own age. She could remember playing hide-and-seek with her one day in an old peony-garden. But she had died years ago. There was only one other child—Lee. He had grown to be a big

boy of ten now, but he was too young to feel his mother's loss at the time she was taken away. Bethany knew that she was still living in a private asylum near town, and that the doctor saw her every day, no matter how violent she was. Lee was the one bright spot left in his life. Busy night and day with his patients, he saw very little of the boy. The child had never known any home but a boarding-house, and was as lawless and unrestrained as some little wild animal. But the doctor saw no fault in him. He praised the reports brought home from school of high per cents in his studies, knowing nothing of his open defiance to authority. He kissed the innocent-looking face on the pillow next his own when he came in late at night, never dreaming of the forbidden places it had been during the day.

Everybody said, "Poor Baxter Trent! It 's a pity that Lee is such a little terror;" but no one warned him. Perhaps he would not have believed them if they had. The thought of all this moved Bethany to sudden speech.

"Uncle Doctor," she broke out impetuously—she had unconsciously used the old name—as she sat down on a low stool near his

knee, "I was piling up my troubles to-night before you came. Not the old ones," she added, quickly, as she saw an expression of sympathy cross his face, "but the new ones that confront me."

She gave a mournful little smile.

" 'Coming events cast their shadow before,' you know, and these shadows look so dark and threatening. I see no possible way but to sell this home. You have had so much to bear yourself that it seems mean to worry you with my troubles; but I do n't know what to do, and I do n't know what 's the matter with me—"

She stopped abruptly, and choked back a sob. He laid his hand softly on her shining hair.

"Tell me all about it, child," he said, in a soothing tone. Then he added, lightly, "I can't make a diagnosis of the case until I know all the symptoms."

When he had heard her little outburst of worry and distrust, he said, slowly:

"You have done all in your power to prepare yourself for a position as stenographer. You have done all you could to secure such a position, and have been unsuccessful. But you still

have a roof over your head, you still have enough on hands to keep you two months longer without selling the house or even renting it—an arrangement that has not seemed to occur to you." He smiled down into her disconsolate face. "It strikes me that a certain little lass I know has been praying, 'Give us this day our to-morrow's bread.' O Bethany, child, can you never learn to trust?"

"But is n't it right for me to be anxious about providing some way to keep the house?" she cried. "Is n't it right to plan and pray for the future? You can 't realize how it would hurt me to give up this place."

"I think I can," he answered, gently. "You forget I have been called on to make just such a sacrifice. You can do it, too, if it is what the All-wise Father sees is best for you. Folks may not think me much of a Christian. They rarely see me in Church—my profession does not allow it. I am not demonstrative. It is hard for me to speak of these sacred things, unless it is when I see some poor soul about to slip into eternity; but I thank the good Father I know how to trust. No matter how he has hurt me, I have been able to hang on to his promises,

and say, 'All right, Lord. The case is entirely in your hands. Amputate, if it is necessary; cut to the very heart, if you will. You know what is best.' "

He pushed the long tray of dishes farther on the table, and, rising suddenly, walked over to the book-shelves nearest the chimney. After several moments' close scrutiny, he took out a well-worn book.

"Ah, I thought it was here," he remarked. "I want to read you a passage that caught my eyes in here once. I remember showing it to your father."

He turned the pages rapidly till he found the place. Then seating himself by the lamp again, he began to read:

"It came to my mind a week or two ago, so full an' sweet an' precious that I can hardly think of anything else. It was during them cold, northeast winds; these winds had made my cough very bad, an' I was shook all to bits, and felt very ill. My wife was sitting by my side, an' once, when I had a sharp fit of it, she put down her work, an' looked at me till her eyes filled with tears, an' she says, 'Frankie, Frankie, whatever will become of us when you be gone?'

She was making a warm little petticoat for the little maid; so, after a minute or two, I took hold of it, an' says, 'What are 'ee making, my dear?' She held it up without a word; her heart was too full to speak. 'For the little maid?' I says. 'An' a nice, warm thing, too. How comfortable it will keep her! Does she know about it yet?'

" 'Know about it? Why, of course not,' said the wife, wondering. 'What should she know about it for?'

"I waited another minute, an' then I said: 'What a wonderful mother you must be, wifie, to think about the little maid like that!'

" 'Wonderful, Frankie? Why, it would be more like wonderful if I forgot that the cold weather was a-coming, and that the little maid would be a-wanting something warm.'

"So, then, you see, I had got her, my friends, and Frankie smiled. 'O wife, says I, 'do you think that you be going to take care o' the little maid like that an' your Father in heaven be a-going to forget you altogether? Come now (bless him!), is n't he as much to be trusted as you are! An' do you think that he 'd see the winter coming up sharp and cold, an' not have something waiting for you, an' just what you

want, too? An' I know, dear wifie, that you would n't like to hear the little maid go a-fretting, and saying: "There the cold winter be a-coming, an' whatever shall I do if my mother should forget me?" Why, you 'd be hurt an' grieved that she should doubt you like that. She knows that you care for her, an' what more does she need to know? That 's enough to keep her from fretting about anything. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." That be put down in his book for you, wifie, and on purpose for you; an' you grieve an' hurt him when you go to fretting about the future, an' doubting his love.' "

Dr. Trent closed the book, and looked into his listener's thoughtful eyes.

"There, Bethany," he said, "is the lesson I have learned. Nothing is withheld that we really need. Sometimes I have thought that I was tried beyond my power of endurance, but when His hand has fallen the heaviest, His infinite fatherliness has seemed most near; and often, when I least expected it, some great blessing has surprised me. I have learned, after a long time, that when we put ourselves unre-

servedly in His hands, he is far kinder to us than we would be to ourselves.

> 'Always hath the daylight broken,
> Always hath he comfort spoken,
> Better hath he been for years
> Than my fears.'

I can say from the bottom of my heart, Bethany, Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

The tears had gathered in Bethany's eyes as she listened. Now she hastily brushed them aside. The face that she turned toward her old friend reminded him of a snowdrop that had caught a gleam of sunshine in the midst of an April shower.

"You have brushed away my last doubt and foreboding, Uncle Doctor!" she exclaimed. "Really, I have been entertaining an angel unawares."

The old clock in the hall sounded the half-hour chime, and he rose to go.

"You have beguiled me into staying much longer than I intended," he answered. "What will my poor patients in the country think of such a long delay?"

"Tell them you have been opening blind

eyes," she said, gravely. "Indeed, Uncle Doctor, the knowledge that, despite all you have suffered, you can still trust so implicitly, strengthens my faith more than you can imagine."

At the hall door he turned and took both her hands in his:

"There is another thing to remember," he said. "You are only called on to live one day at a time. One can endure almost any ache until sundown, or bear up under almost any load if the goal is in sight. Travel only to the milepost you can see, my little maid. Do n't worry about the ones that mark the to-morrows."

CHAPTER VI.

TWO TURNINGS IN BETHANY'S LANE.

"Sunshine and hope are comrades."

THE early morning light streaming into Bethany's room, aroused her to a vague consciousness of having been in a storm the night before. Then she remembered the garden roses beaten to earth by the hail, and the flood of doubt and perplexity that had swept through her heart with such overwhelming force. The same old problems confronted her; but they did not assume such gigantic proportions in the light of this new day, with its infinite possibilities.

All the time she was dressing she heard Jack singing lustily in the next room. He was impatient to try the new brace, and paused between solos to exhort her to greater haste. She knelt just an instant by the low window-seat. The prayer she made was one of the shortest she had ever uttered, and one of the most heart-

felt: "Give me this day my daily bread." That was all; yet it included everything—strength, courage, temporal help, disappointments or blessings—anything the dear Father saw she needed in her spiritual growth. When she arose from her knees, it was with a feeling of perfect security and peace. No matter what the day might bring forth, she would take it trustingly, and be thankful.

About an hour after breakfast she wheeled Jack to a front window. It was growing very warm again.

"It does n't hurt me at all to sit up with this brace on," he said. "If you like, I 'll help you practice, while I watch people go by on the street." He had often helped her gain stenographic speed by dictating rapid sentences. He read too slowly to be of any service that way, but he knew yards of nursery rhymes that he could repeat with amazing rapidity.

"I know there is n't a lawyer living that can make a speech as fast as I can say the piece about 'Who killed Cock Robin,' " he remarked when he first proposed such dictation; "and I can say the 'Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers' verse fast enough to make you dizzy."

Bethany's pencil was flying as rapidly as the boy's tongue, when they heard a cheery voice in the hall.

"It 's Cousin Ray!" cried Jack. "I have felt all morning that something nice was going to happen, and now it has." Then he called out in a tragic tone, " 'By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes.' "

"You saucy boy!" laughed Mrs. Marion, as she appeared in the doorway. "I think he is decidedly better, Bethany; you need not worry about him any longer."

She stooped to kiss his forehead, and drop a great yellow pear in his lap.

"No; I have n't time to stay," she said, when Bethany insisted on taking her hat. "I am to entertain the Missionary Society this afternoon, and Dr. Bascom has given me an unusually long list of the 'sick and in prison' kind to look after this month. It gives me an 'all out of breath' sensation every time I think of all that ought to be attended to."

She dropped into a chair near a window, and picked up a fan.

"You never could guess my errand," she began, hesitatingly.

"I know it is something nice," said Jack, "from the way your eyes shine."

"I think it is fine," she answered; "but I don't know how it will impress Bethany."

She plunged into the subject abruptly.

"The Courtney sisters want to come here to live."

"The Courtney sisters!" echoed Bethany, blankly. "To live! In our house? O Cousin Ray! I have realized for some time that we might have to give up the dear old place; but I did hope that it need not be to strangers."

"Why, they are not strangers, Bethany. They went to school with your mother for years and years. You have heard of Harry and Carrie Morse, I am sure."

"O yes," answered Bethany, quickly. "They were the twins who used to do such outlandish things at Forest Seminary. I remember, mamma used to speak of them very often. But I thought you said it was the Courtney sisters who wanted the house."

"I did. They married brothers, Joe and Ralph Courtney, who were both killed in the late war. They have been widows for over

thirty years, you see. They are just the dearest old souls! They have been away so many, many years, of course you can't remember them. I did not know they were in the city until last night. But just as soon as I heard that they had come to stay, and wanted to go to housekeeping, I thought of you immediately. I could n't wait for the storm to stop. I went over to see them in all that rain."

"Well," prompted Bethany, breathlessly, as Mrs. Marion paused.

She gave a quick glance around the room. She felt sick and faint, now that the prospect of leaving stared her in the face. Yet she felt that, since it had been unsolicited, there must be something providential in the sending of such an opportunity.

"O, they will be only too glad to come," resumed Mrs. Marion, "if you are willing. They remembered the arrangement of the house perfectly, and we planned it all out beautifully. Since Jack's accident you sleep down-stairs anyhow. You could keep the library and the two smaller rooms back of it, and may be a couple of rooms up-stairs. They would take the rest

of the house, and board you and Jack for the rent. Your bread and butter would be assured in that way. They are model housekeepers, and such a comfortable sort of bodies to have around, that I could n't possibly think of a nicer arrangement. Then you could devote your time and strength to something more profitable than taking care of this big house."

"O, Cousin Ray!" was all the happy girl could gasp. Her voice faltered from sheer gladness. "You can't imagine what a load you have lifted from me. I love every inch of this place, every stone in its old gray walls. I could n't bear to think of giving it up. And, just to think! last night, at the very time I was most despondent, the problem was being solved. I can never thank you enough."

"The idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Marion, as she rose to go. "No thanks are due me, child. And Miss Caroline and Miss Harriet, as everybody still calls them, are just as anxious for such an arrangement as you can possibly be. They 'll be over to see you to-morrow, for they are quite anxious to get settled. They have roamed about the world so long they begin to feel that 'there 's no place like home.' Jack, they 've been in

China and Africa and the South Sea Islands. Think of the charming tales in store for you!"

"Goodness, Bethany!" exclaimed Jack, when she came back into the room after walking to the gate with Mrs. Marion. "Your face shines as if there was a light inside of you."

"O, there is, Jackie boy," she answered, giving him an ecstatic hug. "I am so very happy! It seems too good to be true."

"Cousin Ray is awful good to us," remarked the boy, thoughtfully. "Seems to me she is always busy doing something for somebody. She never has a minute for herself. I remember, when I used to go up there, people kept coming all day long, and every one of them wanted something. Why do you suppose they all went to her? Did she tell them they might?"

"Jack, do you remember the plant you had in your window last winter?" she replied. "No matter how many times I turned the jar that held it, the flower always turned around again towards the sun. People are the same way, dear. They unconsciously spread out their leaves towards those who have help and comfort to give. They feel they are welcome, without asking."

"She makes me think of that verse in 'Mother Goose,'" said Jack. "'Sugar and spice and everything nice.' Does n't she you, sister?"

"No," said Bethany, with an amused smile. "Lowell has described her:

> 'So circled lives she with love's holy light,
> That from the shade of self she walketh free.'"

"I do n't 'zactly understand," said Jack, with a puzzled expression.

She explained it, and he repeated it over and over, until he had it firmly fixed in his mind.

Then they went back to the dictation exercises. It was almost dark when they had another caller. Mr. Marion stopped at the door on his way home to dinner.

"I have good news for you, Bethany," he said, with his face aglow with eager sympathy. "Did Ray tell you?"

"About the house?" she said. "Yes. I 've been on a mountain-top all day because of it."

"O, I do n't mean that!" he exclaimed, hastily. "It 's better than that. I mean about Porter & Edmunds."

"I do n't see how anything could be better than the news she brought," said Bethany.

"Well, it is. Mr. Porter asked me to see

their new law-office to-day. They have just moved into the Clifton Block. They have an elegant place. As I looked around, making mental notes of all the fine furnishings, I thought of you, and wished you had such a position. I asked him if he needed a stenographer. It was a random shot, for I had no idea they did. The young man they have has been there so long, I considered him a fixture. To my surprise he told me the fellow is going into business for himself, and the place will be open next week. I told him I could fill it for him to his supreme satisfaction. He promised to give you the refusal of it until to-morrow noon. I leave to-night on a business-trip, or I would take you over and introduce you."

"O, thank you, Cousin Frank!" she exclaimed. "I know Mr. Edmunds very well. He was a warm friend of papa's."

Then she added, impulsively:

"Yesterday I thought I had come to such a dark place that I could n't see my hand before my face. I was just so blue and discouraged I was ready to give up, and now the way has grown so plain and easy, all at once, I feel that I must be living in a dream."

"Bless your brave little soul!" he exclaimed, holding out his hand. "Why did n't you come to me with your troubles? Remember I am always glad to smooth the way for you, just as much as lies in my power."

When he had gone, Bethany crept away into the quiet twilight of the library, and, kneeling before the big arm-chair, laid her head in its cushioned seat.

"O Father," she whispered, "I am so ashamed of myself to think I ever doubted thee for one single moment. Forgive me, please, and help me through every hour of every day to trust unfalteringly in thy great love and goodness."

CHAPTER VII.

JUDGE HALLAM'S DAUGHTER, STENOGRAPHER.

THERE was so much to be done next morning, setting the rooms all in order for the critical inspection of Miss Caroline and Miss Harriet, that Bethany had little time to think of the dreaded interview with Porter & Edmunds.

She wheeled Jack out into the shady, vine-covered piazza, and brought him a pile of things for him to amuse himself with in her absence.

"Ring your bell for Mena if you need anything else," she said. "I will be back before the sun gets around to this side of the house, maybe in less than an hour."

He caught at her dress with a detaining grasp, and a troubled look came over his face.

"O sister! I just thought of it. If you do get that place, will I have to stay here all day by myself?"

"O no," she answered. "Mena can wheel

you around the garden, and wait on you; and I will think of all sorts of things to keep you busy. Then the old ladies will be here, and I am sure they will be kind to you. I 'll be home at noon, and we 'll have lovely long evenings together."

"But if those people come, Mena will have so much more to do, she 'll never have any time to wheel me. Could n't you take me with you?" he asked, wistfully. "I would n't be a bit of bother. I 'd take my books and study, or look out of the window all the time, and keep just as quiet! Please ask 'em if I can't come too, sister!"

It was hard to resist the pleading tone.

"Maybe they 'll not want me," answered Bethany. "I 'll have to settle that matter before making any promises. But never mind, dear, we 'll arrange it in some way."

It was a warm July morning. As Bethany walked slowly toward the business portion of the town, several groups of girls passed her, evidently on their way to work, from the few words she overheard in passing. Most of them looked tired and languid, as if the daily routine of such a treadmill existence was slowly drain-

ing their vitality. Two or three had a pert, bold air, that their contact with business life had given them. One was chewing gum and repeating in a loud voice some conversation she had had with her "boss."

Bethany's heart sank as she suddenly realized that she was about to join the great working-class of which this ill-bred girl was a member. Not that she had any of the false pride that pushes a woman who is an independent wage-winner to a lower social scale than one whom circumstances have happily hedged about with home walls; but she had recalled at that moment some of her acquaintances who would do just such a thing. In their short-sighted, self-assumed superiority, they could make no discrimination between the girl at the cigar-stand, who flirted with her customer, and the girl in the school-room, who taught her pupils more from her inherent refinement and gentleness than from their text-books.

She had remembered that Belle Romney had said to her one day, as they drove past a great factory where the girls were swarming out at noon: "Do you know, Bethany dear, I would rather lie down and die than have to

work in such a place. You can't imagine what a horror I have of being obliged to work for a living, no matter in what way. I would feel utterly disgraced to come down to such a thing; but I suppose these poor creatures are so accustomed to it they never mind it."

Bethany's eyes blazed. She knew Belle Romney's position was due entirely to the tolerance of a distant relative. She longed to answer vehemently: "Well, I would starve before I would deliberately sit down to be a willing dependent on the charity of my friends. It 's only a species of genteel pauperism, and none the less despicable because of the purple and fine linen it flaunts in."

She had not made the speech, however. Belle leaned back in the carriage, and folded her daintily-gloved hands, as they passed the factory-girls, with an air of complacency that amused Bethany then. It nettled her now to remember it.

She turned into the street where the Clifton Block stood, an imposing building, whose first two floors were occupied by lawyers' offices. Porter & Edmunds were on the second floor. The elevator-boy showed her the room. The

door stood open, exposing an inviting interior, for the walls were lined with books, and the rugs and massive furniture bespoke taste as well as wealth.

An elderly gentleman, with his heels on the window-sill and his back to the door, was vigorously smoking. He was waiting for a backwoods client, who had an early engagement. His feet came to the floor with sudden force, and his cigar was tossed hastily out of the window when he heard Bethany's voice saying, timidly,

"May I come in, Mr. Edmunds?"

He came forward with old-school gallantry. It was not often his office was brightened by such a visitor.

"Why, it is Miss Hallam!" he exclaimed, in surprise, secretly wondering what had brought her to his office.

He had met her often in her father's house, and had seen her the center of many an admiring group at parties and receptions. She had always impressed him as having the air of one who had been surrounded by only the most refined influences of life. He thought her unusually charming this morning, all in black,

with such a timid, almost childish expression in her big, gray eyes.

"Take this seat by the window, Miss Hallam," he said, cordially. "I hope this cigar smoke does not annoy you. I had no idea I should have the honor of entertaining a lady, or I should not have indulged."

"Did n't Mr. Marion tell you I was coming this morning?" asked Bethany, in some embarrassment.

"No, not a word. I believe he said something to Mr. Porter about a typewriter-girl that wants a place, but I am sure he never mentioned that you intended doing us the honor of calling."

Bethany smiled faintly.

"I am the typewriter-girl that wants the place," she answered.

"You!" ejaculated Mr. Edmunds, standing up in his surprise, and beginning to stutter as he always did when much excited. "You! w'y-w'y-w'y, you do n't say so!" he finally managed to blurt out.

"What is it that is so astonishing?" asked Bethany, beginning to be amused. "Do you think it is presumptuous in me to aspire to such

a position? I assure you I have a very fair speed."

"No," answered Mr. Edmunds, "it 's not that; but I never any more thought of your going out in the world to make a living than a-a-a pet canary," he added, in confusion.

He seated himself again, and began tapping on the table with a paper-knife.

"Can't you paint, or give music lessons, or teach French?" he asked, half impatiently. "A girl brought up as you have been has no business jostling up against the world, especially the part of a world one sees in the court-room."

Bethany looked at him gravely.

"Yes," she answered, "I can do all those things after a fashion, but none of them well enough to measure up to my standard of proficiency, which is a high one. I do understand stenography, and I am confident I can do thorough, first-class work. I think, too, Mr. Edmunds, that it is a mistaken idea that the girl who has had the most sheltered home-life is the one least fitted to go into such places. Papa used to say we are like the planets; we carry our own atmosphere with us. I am sure one may carry the same personality into a reporter's

stand that she would into a drawing-room. We need not necessarily change with our surroundings."

As she spoke, a slight tinge of pink flushed her cheeks, and she unconsciously raised her chin a trifle haughtily. Mr. Edmunds looked at her admiringly, and then made a gallant bow.

"I am sure, Miss Hallam would grace any position she might choose to fill," he said courteously.

"Then you will let me try," she asked, eagerly. She slipped off her glove, and took pencil and paper from the table. "If you will only test my speed, maybe you can make a decision sooner."

He dictated several pages, which she wrote to his entire satisfaction.

"You are not half as rapid as Jack," she said, laughingly; and then she told him of the practice she had had writing nursery rhymes.

He seemed so interested that she went on to tell him more about the child, and his great desire to be in the office with her.

"I told him I would ask you," she said, finally; "but that it was a very unusual thing

to do, and that I doubted very much if any business firm would allow it."

He saw how hard it had been for her to prefer such a request, and smiled reassuringly.

"It would be a very small thing for me to do for Richard Hallam's boy," he said. "Tell the little fellow to come, and welcome. He need not be in any one's way. We have three rooms in this suite, and you will occupy the one at the far end."

It was hard for Bethany to keep back the tears.

"I can never thank you enough, Mr. Edmunds," she said. "The legacy papa thought he had secured to us was swept away, but he has left us one thing that more than compensates—the heritage of his friendships. I have been finding out lately what a great thing it is to be rich in friends."

Bethany went home jubilant. "Now if my twin tenants turn out to be half as nice," she thought, "this will be a very satisfactory day."

She tried to picture them, as she walked rapidly on, wondering whether they would be prim and dignified, or nervous and fussy. Mrs.

Marion had said they were fine housekeepers. That might mean they were exacting and hard to please.

"What 's the use of borrowing trouble?" she concluded, finally. "I 'll take Uncle Doctor's advice, and not try to count to-morrow's milestones."

She found them sitting on the side piazza, being abundantly entertained by Jack.

"Sister!" he called, excitedly, as she came up the steps to meet them; "this one is Aunt Harry—that 's what she told me to call her—and the other one is Aunt Carrie; and they 've both been around the world together, and both ridden on elephants."

There was a general laugh at the unceremonious introduction.

Miss Caroline took Bethany's hands in her own little plump ones, and stood on tiptoe to give her a hearty kiss. Miss Harriet did the same, holding her a moment longer to look at her with fond scrutiny.

"Such a striking resemblance to your dear mother," she said. "Sister and I hoped you would look like her."

"They are homely little bodies, and dread-

fully old-fashioned," was Bethany's first impression, as she looked at them in their plain dresses of Quaker gray. "But their voices are so musical, and they have such good, motherly faces, I believe they will prove to be real restful kind of people."

"Sister and I have been such birds of passage, that it will seem good to settle down in a real home-nest for a while," said Miss Harriet, as they were going over the house together.

"When one has lived in a trunk for a decade, one appreciates big, roomy closets and wardrobes like these."

They went all over the place, from garret to cellar, and sat down to rest beside an open window, where a climbing rose shook its fragrance in with every passing breeze.

"Mrs. Marion thought you might not be ready for us before next week," sighed Miss Caroline; "but these cool, airy rooms do tempt me so. I wish we could come this very afternoon." She smiled insinuatingly at Bethany. "We have nothing to move but our trunks."

"Well, why not?" answered Bethany. "I shall be glad to surrender the reins any time you want to assume the responsibility."

"Then it 's settled!" cried Miss Caroline, exultingly. "O, I 'm so glad!" and, catching Miss Harriet around her capacious waist, she whirled her around the room, regardless of her protestations, until their spectacles slid down their noses, and they were out of breath.

Bethany watched them in speechless amazement. Miss Caroline turned in time to catch her expression of alarm.

"Did you think we had lost our senses, dear?" she asked. "We do not often forget our dignity so; but we have been so long like Noah's dove, with no rest for the sole of our foot, that the thought of having at last found an abiding-place is really overwhelming."

"I wish you would n't always say 'we,'" remarked Miss Harriet, with dignity. "I am very sure I have outgrown such ridiculous exhibitions of enthusiasm, and it is fully time that you had too."

"O, come now, Harry," responded Miss Caroline, soothingly. "You 're just as glad as I am, and there 's no use in trying to hide our real selves from people we are going to live with."

Then she turned to Bethany with an apologetic air.

"Sister thinks because we have arrived at a certain date on our calendar, we must conform to that date. But, try as hard as I can, I fail to feel any older sometimes than I used to at Forest Seminary, when we made midnight raids on the pantry, and had all sorts of larks. I suppose it does look ridiculous, and I 'm sorry; but I can't grow old gracefully, so long as I am just as ready to effervesce as I ever was."

Bethany was amused at the half-reproachful, half-indulgent look that Miss Harriet bestowed on her sister.

"They 'll be a constant source of entertainment," she thought. "I wonder how we ever happened to drift together."

Something of the last thought she expressed in a remark to the sisters as they went down stairs together.

"Indeed, we did not drift!" exclaimed Miss Caroline, decidedly. "You needed us, and we needed you, and the great Weaver crossed our life-threads for some purpose of his own."

By nightfall the sisters had taken their

places in the old house, as quietly and naturally as twin turtle-doves tuck their heads under their wings in the shelter of a nest. Their presence in the house gave Bethany such a care-free, restful feeling, and a sense of security that she had not had since she had been left at the head of affairs.

After Jack had gone to bed, she drew a rocking-chair out into the wide hall, and sat down to enjoy the cool breeze that swept through it.

Miss Caroline was down in the kitchen, interviewing Mena about breakfast. How delightful it was to be freed from all responsibility of the meals and the marketing! After the next week she would not have even the rooms to attend to, for Miss Caroline had engaged a stout maid to do the housework, that Bethany's inexperienced hands had found so irksome.

Up-stairs, Miss Harriet was stepping briskly around, unpacking one of the trunks. Bethany could hear her singing to herself in a thin, sweet voice, full of old-fashioned quavers and turns. Some of the notes were muffled as she disap-

peared from time to time in the big closet, and some came with jerky force as she tugged at a refractory bureau drawer.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head."

CHAPTER VIII.

A KINDLING INTEREST.

RANK Marion, on his way to the store one morning, stopped at the office where Bethany had been installed just a week.

"You will find me dropping in here quite often," he said to Mr. Edmunds, whom he met coming out of the door. "Since that little cousin of mine is never to be found at home in the daytime any more, I shall have to call on him here. He is my right-hand man in Junior League work."

"Who? Jack?" inquired Mr. Edmunds. "He 's the most original little piece I ever saw. Sorry I 'm called out just now, Frank. You 're always welcome, you know."

Bethany was seated at her typewriter, so intent on her manuscript that she did not notice Mr. Marion's entrance. Jack, in his chair by the window, was working vigorously with slate and pencil at an arithmetic lesson. As Bethany

paused to take the finished page from the machine, Jack looked up and saw Mr. Marion's tall form in the doorway.

"O, come in!" he cried, joyfully. "I want you to see how nice everything is here. We have the best times."

Mr. Marion looked across at Bethany, and smiled at the child's delight.

"Tell me about it," he said, drawing a chair up to the window, and entering into the boy's pleasure with that ready sympathy that was the secret of his success with all children.

"Well, you see, Bethany wheels me onto the elevator, and up we come. And it 's so nice and cool up here. She has n't been very busy yet. While she writes I get my lessons, or draw, or work puzzles. Then, when Mr. Edmunds and Mr. Porter go off, and she has n't anything to do, I recite to her. But the best fun is grocery tales."

"What 's 'grocery tales?' " asked Mr. Marion, with flattering interest.

"Do you see that wholesale grocery-store across the street?" asked Jack, "and all the things sitting around in front? There 's almost everything you can think of, from a broom to

a banana. I choose the first thing I happen to look at, and she tells me a story about it. If it 's a tea-chest, that makes her think of a Chinese story; or if it's a bottle of olives, something about the knights and ladies of Spain. Yesterday it was a chicken-coop, and she told me about a lovely visit she had once on a farm. She says when we come to that coil of rope, it will remind her of a storm she was in on the Mediterranean; and the coffee means a South American story; and the watermelons a darkey story; and the brooms something she read once about an old, blind broom-maker. Then I have lots of fun watching people pass. So many teams stop at the watering-trough over there. I like to wonder where everybody comes from, and imagine what their homes are like. It is almost as good as reading about them in a book."

"You are a very happy little fellow," said Mr. Marion, patting his cheek, approvingly. "I am glad you are getting strong so fast, so that you can go out into this big, discontented world of ours, and teach other people how to be happy. I 've brought you some more work to do. I want you to look up all these references, and copy

them on separate slips of paper for our next meeting. By the way, Bethany," he said, as he rose to go, "I had a letter from our Chattanooga Jew this morning. He is as much in earnest as ever. I wish we could get our League interested in him and his mission."

"It is a very unpopular movement, Cousin Frank," she answered. "Think of the prejudices to overcome. How little the general membership of the Church know or care about the Jews! It seems almost impossible to combat such indifference. Carlyle says, 'Every noble work is at first impossible.' "

"Ah, Bethany," he answered, "and Paul says: 'I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.' I can't get away from the feeling that God wants me to take some forward step in the matter. Every paper I pick up seems to call my attention to it in some way. All the time in my business I am brought in contact with Jews who want to talk to me about my religion. They introduce the subject themselves. Ray and I have been reading Graetz's history lately. I declare it 's a puzzle to me how any one can read an account of all the race en-

dured at the hands of the Christianity of the Middle Ages, and not be more lenient toward them. Pharaoh's cruelties were not a tithe of what was dealt out to them in the name of the gentle Nazarene. No wonder their children were taught to spit at the mention of such a name."

"O, is that history as bad as 'Fox's Book of Martyrs?'" asked Jack, eagerly. "We 've got that at home, with the awfullest black and yellow pictures in it of people being burned to death and tortured. I hope, if it is as interesting, sister will read it out loud."

Bethany made such a grimace of remonstrance that Mr. Marion laughed.

"I 'll send the books over to-morrow. You 'll not care to read all five volumes, Jack; but Bethany can select the parts that will interest you most."

Jack's tenacious memory brought the subject up again that evening at the table.

"Aunt Harry," he asked, abruptly, pausing in the act of helping himself to sugar, "do you like the Jews?"

"Why, no, child," she said, hesitatingly. "I can't say that I take any special interest in

them, one way or another. To tell the truth, I 've never known any personally."

"Would you like to know more about them?" he asked, with childish persistence. " 'Cause Bethany 's going to read to me about them when Cousin Frank sends the books over, and you can listen if you like."

"Anything that Bethany reads we shall be glad to hear," answered Miss Harriet. "At first sister and I thought we would not intrude on you in the evenings; but the library does look so inviting, and it is so dull for us to sit with just our knitting-work, since we have stopped reading by lamp-light, that we can not resist the temptation to go in whenever she begins to read aloud."

"O, you 're home-folks," said Jack.

Bethany had excused herself before this conversation commenced, and was in the library, opening the mail Miss Caroline had forgotten to give her at noon. When the others joined her, she held up a little pamphlet she had just opened.

"Look, Jack! It is from Mr. Lessing, from Chattanooga. It is an article on 'What shall become of the Jew?' I suppose it is written by

one of them, at least his name would indicate it—Leo N. Levi. It will be interesting to look at that question from their standpoint."

"Will I like it?" asked Jack.

"No, I think not," she answered, after a rapid glance through its pages. "We 'll have some more of the 'Bonnie Brier-Bush' to-night, and save this until you are asleep."

Bethany read well, and excelled in Scotch dialect. When she laid down the book after the story of "A Doctor of the Old School," she saw a big tear splash down on Miss Harriet's knitting-work, and Miss Caroline was furtively wiping her spectacles.

"Leave the door open," called Jack, when he had been tucked away for the night. "Then I can listen if it 's nice, or go to sleep if it 's dull."

"Do you really care to hear this?" asked Bethany, picking up the pamphlet.

"Yes," said Miss Caroline, with several emphatic nods. "I 'll own I am very ignorant on the subject; and after something so highly entertaining as these sweet Scotch tales, it 's no more than right that we should take something improving."

"O sister," called Jack's voice from the next

room, "you never told them about Mr. Lessing, did you?"

"No," answered Bethany. "I never told them any of my Chattanooga experiences. Maybe it would be better to begin with them, and then you can understand how I happened to become so interested in the Hebrew people. The pamphlet can wait until another time."

She tossed it back on the table, and settled herself comfortably in a big chair.

"I 'll begin at the beginning," she said, "and tell you how I was persuaded into going, and how strangely events linked into each other."

"Can't you just see it all?" murmured Miss Caroline, as Bethany drew a graphic picture of the mountain outlook, the sunrise, and the crowded tent. When she came to Lessing's story, Miss Harriet dropped her work in her lap, and Miss Caroline leaned forward in her chair.

"Dear! dear! It sounds like a chapter out of a romance!" exclaimed Miss Caroline, when Bethany had finished. "That part about the mother's curse and being buried in effigy makes me think of the novels that we used to smuggle into our rooms at school. I wish you could go

on and give us the next chapter. It is intensely interesting."

"Ah, the next chapter," replied Bethany, sadly. "I thought of that at the time. What can it be but the daily repetition of commonplace events? He will simply go on to the end in a routine of study and work. He will preach to whatever audiences he can gather around him. That is all the world will see. The other part of it, the burden of loneliness laid upon him because of Jewish scorn and Christian distrust, the soul-struggles, the spiritual victories, the silent heroism, will be unwritten and unapplauded, because unseen."

"I don't wonder you are interested," said Miss Harriet. "Would you believe it, I don't know the difference between an orthodox and a reform Jew? I think I shall look it up tomorrow in the encyclopedia."

She picked up the little pamphlet, and opened at random.

"Here is a marked paragraph," she said. " 'The Jew is everywhere in evidence. He sells vodki in Russia; he matches his cunning against Moslem and Greek in Turkey; he fights for existence and endures martyrdom in the Balkan

provinces; he crowds the professions, the arts, the market-place, the bourse, and the army, in France, England, Austria, and Germany. He has invaded every calling in America, and everywhere he is seen; and, what is more to the point, he is felt. He runs through the entire length of history, as a thin but well-defined line, touched by the high lights of great events at almost every point.' "

"Where did we leave off with him, sister?" she asked, turning to Miss Caroline. "Was n't it at the destruction of the temple, somewhere in the neighborhood of 70 A. D.? We shall have to trace that line back a considerable distance, I am thinking, if we would know anything on the subject."

"Let 's trace it then," said Miss Caroline, with her usual alacrity.

Several evenings after, when Bethany came home from the office, she found a new book on the table, with Miss Caroline's name on the fly-leaf. It was "The Children of the Ghetto."

"I bought it this afternoon," she explained, a little nervously. "It is one of Zangwill's. The clerk at the bookstore told me he is called the Jewish Dickens, and that it is very interesting.

Of course, I am no critic, but it looked interesting, and I thought you might not mind reading it aloud. Several sentences caught my eye that made me think it might be as entertaining as 'Old Curiosity Shop,' or 'Oliver Twist.' "

Bethany rapidly scanned several pages. "I believe it is the very thing to give us an insight into the later day customs and beliefs of the masses."

She read the headings of several of the chapters aloud, and a sentence here and there.

"Listen to this!" she exclaimed. " 'We are proud and happy in that the dread unknown God of the infinite universe has chosen our race as the medium by which to reveal his will to the world. History testifies that this has verily been our mission, that we have taught the world religion as truly as Greece has taught beauty and science. Our miraculous survival through the cataclysms of ancient and modern dynasties is a proof that our mission is not yet over.' "

"O, I thought it was going to be a story!" exclaimed Jack, in a disappointed tone.

"It is, dear," answered Bethany. "You can understand part, and I will explain the rest."

So it came about that, after the Scotch tales

were laid aside, the little group in the library nightly turned their sympathies toward the children of the London Ghetto, as it existed in the early days of the century.

"I can never feel the same towards them again," said Miss Caroline, the night they finished the book. "I understand them so much better. It is just as the proem says: 'People who have been living in a ghetto for a couple of centuries are not able to step outside merely because the gates are thrown down, nor to efface the brands on their souls by putting off the yellow badges. Their faults are bred of its hovering miasma of persecution.'"

"Yes," answered Bethany, "I am glad he has given us such a diversity of types. You know that article that Mr. Lessing sent me says: 'No people can be fairly judged by its superlatives. It would be silly to judge all the Chinese by Confucius, or all the Americans by Benedict Arnold. If the Jews squirm and indignantly protest against Shylock and Fagin and Svengali, they must be consistent, and not claim as types Scott's Rebecca and Lessing's Nathan the Wise.' Now, Zangwill has given us a glimpse of all sorts of people—the 'pots and pans' of material

Judaism, as well as the altar-fires of its most spiritual idealists. I hope you 'll go on another investigating tour, Miss Caroline, and bring home something else as instructive."

But before Miss Caroline found time to go on another voyage of discovery among the bookstores, something happened at the office that gave a deeper interest to their future investigations.

Mr. Edmunds sat at the table a few minutes longer than usual, one morning after he had finished dictating his letters, to say: "We are about to make some changes in the office, Miss Hallam. Mr. Porter has decided to go abroad for a while. Family matters may keep him there possibly a year. During his absence it is necessary to have some one in his place; and, after mature deliberation, we have decided to take in a young lawyer who has two points decidedly in his favor. He has marked ability, and he will attract a wealthy class of clients. He is a young Jew, a protege of Rabbi Barthold's. Personally, I have the highest respect for him, although Mr. Porter is a little prejudiced against him on account of his na-

tionality. I wondered if you shared that feeling."

"No, indeed!" answered Bethany, quickly. "I have been greatly interested in studying their history this summer."

"Well, I have never given their past much thought," responded Mr. Edmunds; "but their relation to the business world has recently attracted my attention. It is wonderful to me the way they are filling up the positions of honor and trust all over the world. Statistics show such a large proportion of them have acquired wealth and prominence. Still, it is only what we ought to expect, when we remember their characteristics. They have such 'mental agility,' such power of adapting themselves to circumstances, and such a resistless energy. Maybe I should put their temperate habits first, for I can not remember ever seeing a Jew intoxicated; and as to industry, the records of our county poor-house show that in all the seventy years of its existence, it has never had a Jewish inmate. People with such qualities are like cream, bound to rise to the top, no matter what kind of a vessel they are poured into."

"Who is this young man?" asked Bethany, coming back to the first subject.

"David Herschel," responded Mr. Edmunds. "You may have met him."

"David Herschel!" repeated Bethany, incredulously. She caught her breath in surprise. Was there to be a deliberate crossing of life-threads here, or had she been caught in some tangle of chance? Maybe this was the opportunity she had prayed for that morning when she had listened to Lessing's story, and caught the inspiration of his consecrated life.

A feeling of awe crept over her, that a human voice could so reach the ear of the Infinite, and draw down an answer to its petition. She was almost frightened at the thought of the responsibility such an answer laid upon her. O, the childishness with which we beat against the portals as we importune high Heaven for opportunities, and then shrink back when the Almighty hands them out to us, afraid to take and use what we have most cried for!

CHAPTER IX.

A JUNIOR TAKES IT IN HAND.

T was a sultry morning in August when David Herschel took his place in the law-office of Porter & Edmunds.

The sun beat against the tall buildings until the radiated heat of the streets was sickening in its intensity. Clerks went to their work with pale faces and languid movements. Everything had a wilted look, and the watering-carts left a steam rising in their trail, almost as disagreeable as the clouds of dust had been before.

Miss Caroline had insisted on Jack's remaining at home, and Bethany's wearing a thin white dress in place of her customary suit of heavy black. They had both protested, but as Bethany went slowly towards the office she was glad that the sensible old lady had carried her point.

To shorten the distance, she passed through one of the poorer streets of the town. Disagree-

able odors, suggestive of late breakfasts, floated out from steamy kitchens. Neglected, half-dressed children cried on the doorsteps and quarreled in the gutters.

A great longing came over Bethany for a breath from wide, fresh fields, or green, shady woodlands. This was the first summer she had ever passed in the city. August had always been associated in her mind with the wind in the pine woods, or the sound of the sea on some rocky coast. It recalled the musical drip of the waterfalls trickling down high banks of thickly-growing ferns. It brought back the breath of clover-fields and the mint in hillside pastures.

A strong repugnance to her work seized her. She felt that she could not possibly bear to go back to the routine of the office and the monotonous click of her typewriter. The longer she thought of those old care-free summers, the more she chafed at the confinement of the present one.

She sighed wearily as she reached the entrance of the great building. Every door and window stood open. While she waited for the elevator-boy to respond to her ring, she turned her eyes toward the street. A blind man passed

by, led by a wan, sad-eyed child. The sun was beating mercilessly on the man's gray head, for his cap was held appealingly in his outstretched hand.

"How dared I feel dissatisfied with my lot?" thought Bethany, with a swift rush of pity, as the contrast between this blind beggar's life and hers was forced upon her.

There was no one in the office when she entered. After the glare of the street, it seemed so comfortable that she thought again of the blind beggar and the child who led him, with a feeling of remorse for her discontent.

A great bunch of lilies stood in a tall glass vase on the table, filling the room with their fragrance. She took out a card that was half hidden among them. Lightly penciled, in a small, running hand, was the one word—"Consider!"

"That 's just like Cousin Ray," thought Bethany, quickly interpreting the message. "She knew this would be an unusually trying day on account of the heat, so she gives me something to think about instead of my irksome confinement. 'They toil not, neither do they spin,' " she whispered, lifting one snowy chalice to her lips; "but what help they bring to those

who do—sweet, white evangels to all those who labor and are heavy laden!"

She fastened one in her belt, then turned to her work. She had been copying a record, and wanted to finish it before Mr. Edmunds was ready to attend to the morning mail. Her fingers flew over the keys without a pause, except when she stopped to put in a new sheet of paper. When she was nearly through, she heard Mr. Edmunds's voice in the next room, and increased her speed. She had forgotten that this was the day David Herschel was to come into the office. He had taken the desk assigned him, and was so busily engaged in conversation with Mr. Edmunds that for a while he did not notice the occupant of the next room. When, at last, he happened to glance through the open door, he did not recognize Bethany, for she was seated with her back toward him.

He noticed what a cool-looking white dress she wore, the graceful poise of her head, and her beautiful sunny hair. Then he saw the lilies beside her, and wished she would turn so that he could see her face.

"Some fair Elaine—a lily-maid of Astolat," he thought, and then smiled at himself for hav-

ing grown Tennysonian over a typewriter before he had even heard her name or seen her face.

At last Bethany finished the record, with a sigh of relief. Quickly fastening the pages, she rose to take it into the next room. Just on the threshold she saw Herschel, and gave an involuntary little start of surprise.

As she stood there, all in white, with one hand against the dark door-casing, she looked just as she had the night David first saw her. He arose as she entered.

Mr. Edmunds was not usually a man of quick perceptions, but he noticed the look of admiration in David's eyes, and he thought they both seemed a trifle embarrassed as he introduced them.

They had recalled at the same moment the night in the Chattanooga depot, when she had distinctly declared to Mr. Marion that she did not care to make his acquaintance.

For once in her life she lost her usual self-possession. That gracious ease of manner which "stamps the caste of Vere de Vere" was one of her greatest charms. But just at this moment, when she wished to atone for that un-

fortunate remark by an especially friendly greeting, when she wanted him to know that her point of view had changed entirely, and that not a vestige of the old prejudice remained, she could not summon a word to her aid.

Conscious of appearing ill at ease, she blushed like a diffident school-girl, and bowed coldly.

David courteously remained standing until she had laid the record on Mr. Edmunds's desk and left the room.

Mr. Edmunds glanced at him quickly, as he resumed his seat; but there was not the slightest change of expression to show that he had noticed what appeared to be an intentional haughtiness of manner in Bethany's greeting. But he had noticed it, and it stung his sensitive nature more than he cared to acknowledge, even to himself.

Nothing more passed between them for several days, except the formal morning greeting. Then Jack came back to the office. He had gained rapidly since the new brace had been applied. During his enforced absence on account of the heat, he found that he could wheel himself short distances, and proudly insisted on doing so, as they went through the hall. He was

a great favorite in the building. Everybody, from the janitor to the dignified judge on the same floor, stopped to speak to him. He was such a thorough boy, so full of fun and spirits, despite the misfortune that chained him to the chair and had sometimes made him suffer extremely, that the sight of him oftener provoked pleasure than pity. He was so glad to get back to the office that he was bubbling over with happiness. It seemed to him he had been away for an age. The cordial reception he met on every hand made his eyes twinkle and the dimples show in his cheeks.

Mr. Edmunds had not come down, but David was at his desk, busily writing. Bethany paused as they passed through the room.

"Allow me to introduce my little brother, Mr. Herschel," she said. "Jack is very anxious to meet you."

He glanced up quickly. This friendly-voiced girl, leaning over Jack's chair, with the brightness of his roguish face reflected in her own, was such a transformation from the dignified Miss Hallam he had known heretofore, that he could hardly credit his eyesight. He was surprised into such an unusual cordiality of

manner, that Jack straightway took him into his affections, and set about cultivating a very strong friendship between them.

One afternoon Bethany was called into another office to take a deposition. She left Jack busy drawing on his slate.

David, who had been reading several hours, laid down the book after a while, with a yawn, and glanced into the next room. The steady scratch of the slate pencil had ceased, and Jack was gazing disconsolately out of the window.

As he heard the book drop on the table he turned his head quickly. "May I come in there?" he asked David eagerly.

David nodded assent. "You may come in and wake me up. The heat and the book together, have made me drowsy."

Jack pushed his chair over by a window, and looked out towards the court house. It was late in the afternoon, and the massive building threw long shadows across the green sward surrounding it.

"I wanted to see if the flag is flying," said Jack. "I can't tell from my window. Don't you love to watch it flap? I do, for it always makes me think of heroes. I love he-

roes, and I love to listen to stories about 'em. Do n't you? It makes you feel so creepy, and your hair kind o' stands up, and you hold your breath while they 're a-risking their lives to save somebody, or doing something else that 's awfully brave. And then, when they 've done it, there 's a lump in your throat; but you feel so warm all over somehow, and you want to cheer, and march right off to 'storm the heights,' and wipe every thing mean off the face of the earth, and do all sorts of big, brave things. I always do. Do n't you?"

"Yes," answered David, amused by his boyish enthusiasm, yet touched by the recognition of a kindred spirit. "May be you will be a hero yourself, some day," he suggested in order to lead the boy further on.

"No, I 'm afraid not," answered Jack, sadly. "Papa wanted me to be a lawyer. He was in the war till he got wounded so bad he had to come home. We've got his sword and cap yet. I used to put 'em on sometimes, and say I was going to go to West Point and learn to be a soldier. But he always shook his head and said, 'No, son, that 's not the highest way you can serve your country now.' Then sometimes I think I 'll

have to be a preacher like my grandfather, John Wesley Bradford, because he left me all his library, and I am named for him. Jack is n't my real name, you know."

"Would you like to be a preacher?" asked David, as the boy paused to catch a fly that was buzzing exasperatingly around him.

"No!" answered Jack, emphasizing his answer by a savage slap at the fly. "Only except when we get to talking about the Jews. You know we are very much interested in your people at our house."

"No, I did n't know it," answered David, amused by the boy's matter-of-fact announcement. "How did you come to be so interested?"

"Well, it started with the Epworth League Conference at Chattanooga. There was a converted Jew up there on the mountain that spoke in the sunrise meeting. Cousin Frank went to see him afterwards. He took Bethany with him to write down what they said in shorthand. O, he had the most interesting history! You just ought to hear sister tell it. You know the two old ladies I told you about, that live at our house. Well, may be it is n't polite to tell you so, but

they did n't have the least bit of use for the Jews before that. Now, since we 've been reading about the awful way they were persecuted, and how they 've hung together through thick and thin, they 've changed their minds."

"And you say that it is only when you are talking about the Jews that you would like to be a preacher," said David, as the boy stopped, and began whistling softly. He wanted to bring him back to the subject.

"Yes," answered Jack. "When I think how that man's whole life was changed by a little Junior League girl; how she started him, and he 'll start others, and they 'll start somebody else, and the ball will keep rolling, and so much good will be done, just on her account, I 'd like to do something in that line myself. I 'm first vice-president of our League, you know," he said, proudly displaying the badge pinned on his coat.

"But I would n't like to be a regular preacher that just stands up and tells people what they already believe. That 's too much like boxing a pillow." He doubled up his fist and sparred at an imaginary foe.

"I 'd like to go off somewhere, like Paul did, and make every blow count. We studied the life of Paul last year in the League. Talk about heroes—there 's one for you. My, but he was game! Thrashed and stoned, and shipwrecked and put in prison, and chained up to another man—but they could n't choke him off!" Jack chuckled at the thought.

"Did you ever notice," he continued, "that when a Jew does turn Christian he 's deader in earnest than anybody else? Cousin Frank told us to notice that. There 's Matthew. He was making a good salary in the custom-house, and he quit right off. And Peter and Andrew and the rest of 'em left their boats and all their fishing tackle, and every thing in the wide world that they owned. Mr. Lessing had even to give up his family. Cousin Frank told us about ever so many that had done that way. So that 's why I 'd rather preach to them than other people. They amount to so much when you once get them made over."

"You might commence on me," said David.

Jack colored to the roots of his hair, and looked confused. He stole a sidelong glance at

David, and began to wheel his chair slowly back into the other room.

"I have n't gone into the business yet," he called back over his shoulder, recovering his equanimity with young American quickness, "But when I do I 'll give you the first call."

David was so amused by the conversation that he could not refrain from recounting part of it to Bethany when she returned. It seemed to put them on a friendlier footing.

Finding that she was really making a study of the history of his people, he gave her many valuable suggestions, and several times brought Jewish periodicals with articles marked for her to read.

"My Sunday-school class have become so interested," she told him. "They are very well versed in the ancient history, but this is something so new to them."

"I wish you knew Rabbi Barthold," he exclaimed. "He would be an inspiration in any line of study, but especially in this, for he has thrown his whole soul into it. Ah, I wish you read Hebrew. One loses so much in the translation. There are places in the Psalms and Job

where the majesty of the thought is simply untranslatable. You know there are some pebbles and shells that, seen in water, have the most exquisite delicacy of coloring; yet taken from that element, they lose that brilliancy. I have noticed the same effect in changing a thought from the medium of one language to another."

"Yes," answered Bethany, "I have recognized that difficulty, too, in translating from the German. There is a subtle something that escapes, that while it does not change the substance, leaves the verse as soulless as a flower without its fragrance."

"Ah! I see you understand me," he responded. "That is why I would have you read the greatest of all literature in its original setting. Are you fond of language?"

"Yes," she answered, "though not an enthusiast. I took the course in Latin and German at school, and got a smattering of French the year I was abroad. Afterwards I read Greek a little at home with papa, to get a better understanding of the New Testament. But Hebrew always seemed to me so very difficult that only spectacled theologians attempted it. You know

ordinary tourists ascend the Rigi and Vesuvius as a matter of course. Only daring climbers attempt the Jungfrau. I scaled only the heights made easy of ascent by a system of meisterschafts and mountain railways."

He laughed. "Hebrew is not so difficult as you imagine, Miss Hallam. Any one that can master stenography can easily compass that. There is a similarity in one respect. In both, dots and dashes take the place of vowels. I will bring you a grammar to-morrow, and show you how easy the rudiments are."

Jack was more interested than Bethany. He had never seen a book in Hebrew type before. The square, even characters charmed him, and he began to copy them on his slate.

"I 'd like to learn this," he announced. "The letters are nothing but chairs and tables."

"It was a picture language in the beginning," said David, leaning over his chair, much pleased with his interest. "Now, that first letter used to be the head of an ox. See how the horns branch? And this next one, Beth, was a house. Do n't you remember how many names in the Bible begin with that—Beth-el, Beth-horon,

Beth-shan—they all mean house of something; house of God, house of caves, house of rest."

Jack gave a whistled "whe-ew!" "It would teach a fellow lots. What are you a house of, Beth-any?"

He looked up, but his sister had been called into the next room.

"Would you really like to study it, Jack?" asked David. "It will be a great help to you when you 'go into the business' of preaching to us Jews."

Jack tilted his head to one side, and thrust his tongue out of the corner of his mouth in an embarrassed way. Then he looked up, and saw that David was not laughing at him, but soberly awaiting his answer.

"Yes, I really would," he answered, decidedly.

"Then I 'll teach you as long as you are in the office."

Mr. Marion came in one day and saw David's dark head and Jack's yellow one bending over the same page, and listened to the boy's enthusiastic explanation of the letters.

"I wish we could form a class of our Sabbath-

school teachers," said Mr. Marion. "Would you undertake to teach it, Herschel?"

The young man hesitated. "If it were convenient I might make the attempt," he said. "But I do not live in the city. My home is out at Hillhollow."

Then, after a pause, while some other plan seemed to be revolving in his mind, he asked: "Why not get Rabbi Barthold? He is a born teacher, and nothing would delight him more than to imbue some other soul with a zeal for his beloved mother-tongue."

"I 'll certainly take the matter into consideration," responded Mr. Marion, "if you will get his consent, and find what his terms are. Bethany, I 'll head the list with your name. Then there 's Ray and myself. That makes three, and I know at least three of my teachers that I am sure of. I wish George Cragmore were here. Do you know, Bethany, it would not surprise me very much if the Conference sends him here this fall?"

"Not in Dr. Bascom's place," she exclaimed.

"O no, he is too young a man for Garrison Avenue, and unmarried besides. But I heard

that the Clark Street Church had asked for him. I hope the bishop will consider the call."

"Do n't set your heart on it, Cousin Frank," she answered. "You know what is apt to befall 'the best laid schemes of mice and men.' "

CHAPTER X.

THE DEACONESS'S STORY.

AUGUST slipped into September. The vase on Bethany's desk, that Mrs. Marion had kept filled with lilies, brightened the room with the glow of the earliest golden-rod.

"Is n't it pretty?" said Jack, drawing a spray through his fingers. "It makes me think of your hair, sister. They are both so soft and fuzzy-looking."

"And like the sunshine," added David mentally, wishing he dared express his admiration as openly as Jack. His desk was at an angle overlooking Bethany's, and he often studied her face while she worked, as he would have studied some rare portrait—not so much for the perfect contour and delicacy of coloring as for the soul that shone through it.

She had seldom spoken to him of spiritual things. It was from Jack he learned how interested she was in all her Church relationships.

Still he felt forcibly an influence that he could not define; that silent charm of a consecrated life, linked close with the perfect life of the Master.

One day when he was thus idly occupied, the janitor tiptoed into the room, ushering a lady past to Bethany's desk. David looked up as she passed, attracted by her unusual costume. It was all black, except that there were deep, white cuffs rolled back over the sleeves, and a large, white collar. The close-fitting black bonnet was tied under the chin with broad white bows. She was a sweet-faced woman, with strong, capable looking hands.

David heard Bethany exclaim, "Why, Josephine Bentley!" as if much surprised to see her. Then they stood face to face, holding each other's hands while they talked in low, rapid tones.

The stranger staid only a few moments. After she passed out, David strolled leisurely up to Bethany's desk.

"I hope you 'll excuse my curiosity, Miss Hallam," he said. "I am interested in the costume of the lady who was here just now. I 've seen one like it before. Can you tell me to what

order she belongs? Is it anything like the Sisters of Charity?"

"Yes, something like it," she answered. "She is a deaconess. There is this difference. They take no vows of perpetual service to the order, but their lives are as entirely consecrated to their work as though they had 'taken the veil,' as the nuns call it. This friend of mine who was just here, is a visiting deaconess. She goes about doing good in the Master's own way, to rich and poor alike. She came in just now to report a case of destitution she had discovered. I am chairman of the Mercy and Help Department in our League."

"Is that all they do?" asked David.

"All!" repeated Bethany. "You should see the Deaconess Home on Clark Street. They have a hospital there, and a Kitchen-garten. It is the work of some of these women to gather in all the poor, neglected girls they can find. They make it so very attractive that the poor children are taught to be respectable little housekeepers, without suspecting that the music and games are really lessons. Homes that could be reached in no other way have some wonderful changes wrought in them."

"You have so many different organizations in your Church," said David. "Seems to me I am always hearing of a new one. There is an old saying, 'Too many cooks spoil the broth.' Did you never prove the truth of that?"

"Now, that 's one beauty of Methodism," exclaimed Bethany. "The little wheels all fit into the big one like so many cogs, and all help each other. For instance, here is the deaconess work. It goes hand in hand with the League, only reaching out farther, with our motto of 'Lift Up,' for they have an 'open sesame' that unbars all avenues to them. Of all hard, self-sacrificing lives, it seems to me a nurse deaconess has the hardest. She goes only into homes unable to pay for such services, and whatever there is to do in the way of nursing, or of cleansing these poverty-stricken homes, she does unflinchingly."

"The reason I asked," answered David, "is that one day last week I went down to that terrible quarter of the city near the lower wharves. I wanted to find a man who I knew would be a valuable witness in the Dartmon murder case. I had been told that the only time to find him would be before six o'clock, as he was a deck-hand on one of the early boats. I had been

directed to a laundry-office in a row of rotten old tenements near the river. I found the room used as an office was down in a damp basement. It was about half-past five when I reached there. I went down the rickety old stairs and knocked several times. You can imagine my surprise when the door was opened by a refined-looking woman, in just such a costume as your friend wore, except, of course, the little bonnet. When I told her my errand, she asked me to step inside a moment. The smell of sewer-gas almost stifled me at first. There was a narrow counter where a few bundles were lying, still uncalled for. I learned afterward, that the laundry had failed, and these were left to await claimants. There was a calico curtain stretched across the room to form a partition. She drew it aside, and motioned me to look in. There was a table, two chairs, a gasoline stove, and an old bed. Lying across the foot of the bed, as if utterly worn-out with weariness and sorrow, lay a young girl heavily sleeping. A baby, only a few months old, was lying among the pillows, as white and still as if it were dead. The woman dropped the curtain with a shudder. 'It is the poor girl's husband you are looking for,' she said. 'He is

a rough, drunken fellow, and has been away for days, nobody knows where. The baby is dying. I was called here at three o'clock this morning. A physician came for me, but he said it could not live many hours. O, it was awful! The cockroaches swarmed all over the floor, and the rats were so bad they fairly ran over our feet. The poor girl sank in a heavy stupor soon after I came, from sheer exhaustion. There is nothing to eat in the house, and the milk I brought with me for the baby has soured. It seems a dreadful thing to say, but I dare not leave the baby while she is asleep long enough to get anything—on account of the rats.' Of course I went out and got the things she needed. Then there was nothing more I could do, she said. The wretched poverty of the scene, and the woman's bravery, have been in my thoughts ever since."

"I heard of that case yesterday," Bethany said, when he had finished. "I know the nurse, Belle Carleton. The baby died, and they took the mother to the Deaconess Hospital. She has typhoid fever. Belle told me of another experience she had. Her life is full of them. She was sent to a family where drunkenness was the cause of the poverty. The man had not had steady

work for a year, because he was never sober more than a few days at a time. They lived in three rooms in the rear basement of a large tenement-house. Belle said, when she opened the door of the first room, it seemed the most forlorn place she had ever seen. There was a table piled full of dirty dishes, and a cooking-stove covered with ashes, on which stood a wash-boiler filled with half-washed clothes. The floor looked as if it had never known the touch of a broom. The odor of the boiling suds was sickening. A slatternly, half-grown girl, one of the neighbors, stood beside a leaky tub, washing as best she knew how. Four dirty, half-starved children were playing on the bare floor. Their mother was sick in the next room. I could n't begin to repeat Belle's description of that bedroom, it was so filthy and infested with vermin. She said, when she saw all that must be done, that repulsive creature bathed, the dishes washed, and the floor scrubbed, a great loathing came over her. She felt that she could not possibly touch a thing in the room. She wanted to turn and run away from it all. I said to her, 'O, Belle, how could you force yourself to do such repulsive things?' "

"What did she say?" exclaimed Herschel.

Bethany's face reflected some of the tenderness that must have shone in Belle Carleton's, as she repeated her answer softly, "For Jesus' sake!"

There was a long pause, which Herschel broke by saying: "And she staid there, I suppose, forced her shrinking hands into contact with what she despised, did the most menial services, from a sense of duty to a man whom she had never seen, who died centuries ago? Miss Hallam, how could she? I find it very hard to understand."

"No, not from a sense of duty," corrected Bethany, "so much as love."

"Well, for love then. What was there in this man of Nazareth to inspire such devotion after such a lapse of time? I understand how one might admire his ethical teaching, how one might even try to embody his precepts in a code to live by; but how he can inspire such sublime annihilation of self, surpasses my comprehension. He was no greater lawgiver than Moses, yet who makes such sacrifices for the love of Moses? Peter suffered martyrdom, and Paul;

yet who is ready to lay down his life cheerfully and say, 'I do it for the sake of Peter—or Paul?' "

"Mr. Herschel," said Bethany, looking up at him wistfully, "don't you see that it is no mere man who exercises such power; that he must be what he claimed—one with the Father?"

Cragmore's passionate exclamation that day on the train came back to him: "O, my friend, if you could only see my Savior as he has been revealed to me!"

Then he seemed to hear Lessing's voice as they paced back and forth in front of the tent, arm in arm in the darkness.

"Of a truth you can not understand these things, unless you be born again—be born of the Spirit, into a realm of spiritual knowledge you have never yet even dreamed of. Winged life is latent in the worm, even while it has no conception of any existence higher than the cabbage-leaf it crawls upon. But how is it possible for it to conceive of flight until it has passed through some change that bursts the chrysalis and provides the wings?"

The silence was growing oppressive. David shook his head, rose, and slowly walked out of the room.

. . . . . .

"Sister," said Jack, a few days after, as she wheeled him homeward from the office at noontime, "Mr. Herschel keeps teasing me all the time about something I said once about preaching to the Jews. He brings it up so often, that if he does n't look out I 'll begin on him sure enough."

Whatever answer Bethany might have made was interrupted by Miss Caroline, who met them as they turned a corner.

"Do tell!" she exclaimed in surprise. "You were in my mind just this minute. I wondered if I might not chance to meet you."

"Where have you been, Aunt Carrie?" asked Jack, seeing that she carried several small parcels.

"Shopping," she said. "Just think of it! Caroline Courtney actually out shopping in the dry-goods stores."

"What 's the occasion?" asked Bethany. "It must be something important. I can't remember that you have done such a thing before

since I have known you. Have you been invited to a ball, a wedding, or a wake?"

Miss Caroline beamed on them through her spectacles. "Really, my dears, that is just what I would like to know myself. That 's why I had to make these purchases. Your cousin Ray came in this morning, just after you had gone, to invite us all to go to her house at half-past six this evening. She would n't tell us what sort of an occasion she was planning, only that it was a surprise for everybody, Mr. Marion most of all. He has been gone a week on a business trip, but will get home to-night at six. Sister and I have been trying to think what kind of an occasion it could be. I know it is n't their wedding anniversary, nor her birthday. Maybe it is his. So you see we could n't decide just how we ought to dress—whether to wear our very best dove-colored silks and point lace, or the black crepon dresses we have had two seasons. Sister absolutely refuses to carry her elegant fan that she got in Brussels, although I want very much to take mine, especially if we wear the gray dresses. My second best is broken, and of course we would n't want to carry a palm-leaf. There was no other way but to take the second best fan

down and match it. Then she had lost one of the bows of ribbon that was on her gray dress, and I had to match that, in case we decided to wear the grays. Here I have spent the whole morning over my fan and her ribbon."

"Dear me!" said Jack. "Why don't you carry your Brussels fan and wear your gray dress, and let her wear her black dress and take the kind of fan she wanted?"

"O, my child!" exclaimed Miss Caroline, "Neither of us would have taken a mite of comfort so. You don't understand how it feels when there are two of you. When you have spent—well, a great many years, in having things alike, you don't feel comfortable unless you are in pairs."

It was arranged that Jack should not go back to the office that afternoon. The sisters volunteered to take him with them.

Bethany hurried through her work, but it seemed to her she had never had so many interruptions, or so much to do.

It was after six when she closed her desk. Mr. Edmunds noticed the tired look on her flushed face, and said:

"Miss Hallam, my carriage is waiting down

stairs. I have to stay here some time longer to meet a man who is late in keeping his engagement. Jerry may as well take you home while he is waiting." He went down on the elevator with her, and handed her into the carriage.

"Better stay out in the fresh air a little before you start home," he said, kindly. "It will do you good."

Bethany sank back gratefully among the cushions. Jerry had been her father's coachman at one time. He grinned from ear to ear as she took her seat.

"We 'll take a spin along the river road," she said. "Give me a glimpse of the fields and the golden-rod, and then take me to Mrs. Marion's, on Phillips Avenue."

"Yes, miss," said Jerry, touching his hat. "I know all the roads you like best!"

The impatient horses needed no urging. They fairly flew down the beaten track that led from the noisy, bouldered streets into the grassy byways. On they went, past suburban orchards and outlying pastures, to the sights and sounds of the real country.

Bethany heard the slow, restful tinkle of bells in a quiet lane where the cows stood softly

lowing at the bars. She heard the coo of doves in the distance, and the call of a quail in a brown stubble-field near by. Then the wind swept up from the river, now turning red in the sunset. It put new life into her pulses, and a new light in her eyes. The weariness was all gone. The wind had blown the light, curly hair about her face, and she put up her hands to smooth it back, as they came in sight of Mrs. Marion's house.

"It does n't make any difference," she thought. "I can run up into Cousin Ray's room and put myself in order before any one sees me."

As the carriage stopped, some one stepped up quickly to assist her alight. It was David Herschel.

"Of all times!" she thought; "when I am literally blown to pieces. How queerly things do happen in this world!"

To her still greater wonderment, instead of closing the gate after her and going on down the street, he followed her up the steps.

"Cousin Ray said this was to be a surprise," she thought. "This must be part of it."

Miss Harriet and Miss Caroline had just smoothed their plumage in the guest-chamber,

and were coming down the stairs hand in hand as David and Bethany entered the reception-hall.

This was their first glimpse of David. They had been very curious to see him. Jack had talked about him so much that they recognized him instantly from his description.

Miss Caroline squeezed Miss Harriet's hand, and said in a dramatic whisper, "Sister! the surprise."

"Look at Bethany," remarked Miss Harriet. "How unusually bright she looks, and yet a little flushed and confused. I wonder if he has been saying anything to her. They came in together."

"Pooh!" puffed Miss Caroline. Then they both moved forward with their most beaming "company smile," as Jack called it, to meet Mr. Herschel.

"Come in here," said Mrs. Marion, leading the way into the drawing-room, while Bethany made her escape up stairs.

"Mrs. Courtney, allow me to introduce Mrs. Dameron."

"Sally Atwater!" fairly shrieked Miss Caro-

line and Miss Harriet in chorus, as a tall, thin woman, with gray hair and sharp, twinkling eyes rose to meet them; "Sally Atwater, for the land's sake! how did you ever happen to get here?"

"It 's an old school friend of theirs," explained Mrs. Marion to David, as the twins stood on tiptoe to grasp her around the neck and kiss her repeatedly between their exclamations of joyful surprise. "They have n't seen her since they were married. I 'll present you, and then we 'll leave them to have a good old gossip."

During the introductions in the drawing-room, Mr. Marion came into the hall, with his gripsack in his hand.

Why, hello, Jack!" he called cheerily. "How are you, my boy? I 'm so glad to see you."

He hung up his hat, and went forward to clap him on the shoulder and hold the little hands lovingly in his big, strong ones. While he still sat on the arm of Jack's chair, there was a sudden parting of the portieres behind them, a swift rustle, and two white hands met over his eyes and blindfolded him.

"O! O!" cried Jack ecstatically, and then

clapped his hand over his mouth as he heard a warning "Sh!"

"It 's Ray, of course," said Mr. Marion, laughing and reaching backwards to seize whoever had blindfolded him. "Nobody else would take such liberties."

"O, would n't they?" cried a mocking voice. "What about Ray's younger sister?"

He turned around, and catching her by the shoulders, held her out in front of him.

"Well, Lois Denning!" he exclaimed in amazement. "When did you get here, little sister? I never imagined you were within two hundred miles of this place."

"Neither did Ray until this morning. I just walked in unannounced."

When he had given her a hearty welcome she said: "O, I 'm not the only one to surprise you. Just go in the other room, Brother Frank, and see who all 's there, while I talk with this young man I have n't seen for a year."

Lois Denning had been Jack's favorite cousin since he was old enough to fasten his baby fingers in her long, brown hair. In her yearly visits to her sister she had devoted so much of her time to him, and been such a willing slave,

that he looked forward to her coming even a shade more eagerly than he watched for Christmas.

There was one thing that remained longest in the memory of every guest who had ever enjoyed the hospitality of the Marion home. It was the warm welcome that made itself continually felt. It met them even in the free swing of the wide front door that seemed to say, "Just walk right in now, and make yourself at home."

There was an atmosphere of genial comfort and cheer that cast its spell on all who strayed over its inviting threshold. It made them long to linger, and loath to leave.

David Herschel was quick to appreciate the warm cordiality of his greeting. He had not been in the house five minutes until he felt himself on the familiar footing of an old friend. At first he wondered at the strange assortment of guests, and thought it queer he had been asked to meet the elderly twins and their old friend, who were so absorbed in each other.

Then Mrs. Marion brought in her sister, Lois Denning—a slim, graceful girl in a white duck suit, with a red carnation in the lapel of the jaunty jacket. She was a lively, outspoken girl,

decided in her opinions, and original in her remarks.

"That red carnation just suits her," said David to himself, as they talked together. "She is so bright and spicy."

"Is n't it time for dinner, Ray?" asked Mr. Marion, anxiously. "It 's getting dark, and I 'm as hungry as a schoolboy."

"Yes, and your guests will think you are as impatient as one," she answered, laughingly. "We must wait a few minutes longer. Mr. Cragmore has n't come yet."

"Cragmore!" cried Mr. Marion, starting to his feet.

"O dear," exclaimed his wife, "I did n't intend to tell you he was coming. I knew you had n't seen the report from Conference yet, and I wanted to surprise you. He has been sent to the Clark Street Church. I met him coming up from the depot this morning, and asked him to dine with us to-night."

"Now I do wish I were a school-boy!" exclaimed Mr. Marion, "so that I might give vent to my delight as I used to."

"I remember how loud you could whoop when you were two feet six," remarked Mrs.

Dameron. "I should not care to risk hearing you, now that you are six feet two."

There was a quick ring at the front door, and the next instant Frank Marion and George Cragmore were shaking hands as though they could never stop.

"I 'm going to see if they fall on each other's necks and weep a la Joseph and his brethren," said Lois, tiptoeing towards the hall. "I 've heard so much about George Cragmore, that I feel that I am about to be presented to a whole circus—menagerie and all."

"And how are ye, Mistress Marion?" they heard his musical voice say.

"Will ye moind that now," commented Lois in an undertone. "How 's that for a touch of the rale auld brogue?"

He was introduced to the old ladies first, then to the saucy Lois and Jack. Then he caught sight of Herschel. They met with mutual pleasure, and were about cordially to renew their acquaintance, begun that day on the car, when Cragmore glanced across the room and saw Bethany.

Both Lois and David noticed the way his

face lighted up, and the eagerness with which he went forward to speak to her.

That evening was the beginning of several things. The Hebrew class was organized. Mr. Marion had found only two of his teachers willing to undertake the work, but Lois cheerfully allowed herself to be substituted for the third one he had been so sure would join them.

"I 'll not be here more than long enough to get a good start," she said, "but I 'm in for anything that 's going—Hebrew or Hopscotch, whichever it happens to be."

The twins declined to take any part. "I know it is beyond us," sighed Miss Harriet. "The Latin conjugations were always such a terror to me, and sister never did get her bearings in the German genders."

When it came time for the merry party to break up, Frank Marion would not listen to any good-nights from Cragmore.

"You 're not going away. That 's the end of it," he declared. "I 'll walk down with you to the hotel, and have your trunk sent up. You 're to stay here until you get a boarding place to suit you. I would n't let you go then,

if I did not know it was essential for you to live nearer your congregation."

Mr. Marion walked on ahead, pushing Jack's chair, with Miss Caroline on one side, and Miss Harriet on the other.

Bethany followed with George Cragmore. There was a brilliant moonlight, and they walked slowly, enjoying to the utmost the rare beauty of the night.

"Come in a moment, George," called Mr. Marion, as he wheeled Jack up the steps. "I want to finish spinning this yarn."

They all went into the hall.

Bethany opened the door into the library and struck a match. Cragmore took it from her and lighted the gas.

But Mr. Marion still stood in the hall with his attentive audience of three.

"I 'll be through in a moment," he called. The sisters dropped down in a large double rocker.

"You might as well sit down, too, Mr. Cragmore," said Bethany. "His minute may prove to be elastic."

Cragmore looked around the homelike old room, and then down at the fair-haired woman

at his side. "Not to-night, thank you," he responded; "but I should like to come some other time. Yes, I think I should like to come here very often, Miss Hallam."

The admiration in his eyes, and the tone, made the remark so very personal that Bethany was slightly annoyed.

"O, our latch-string is always out to the clergy," she said lightly, and then led the way back to the hall to join the others.

CHAPTER XI.

"YOM KIPPUR."

HE morning after the first meeting of the Hebrew class at Rabbi Barthold's, Frank Marion came into the office.

"Herschel," he said, "when do you have your Day of Atonement services? Is it this week or next? Rabbi Barthold invited us to attend, but I am not sure about the date. He is going to preach a series of sermons that are to set forth the views now held by the Reform school, and Cragmore and I are anxious to hear them."

"It is the week after this," said David, consulting the calendar.

"Then I can arrange to get in from my trip in time for the Friday night service."

"What do you think of Rabbi Barthold?" asked David. "Isn't he a magnificent old fellow?"

Marion stroked his mustache thoughtfully.

"Well," he said after some deliberation, "I hardly know where to place him. He does n't belong to this age. If I believed in the transmigration of souls, I should say that some old Levite, whose life-work had been to keep the Temple lamps perpetually burning, had strayed back to earth again.

"That seems to be his mission now. He is trying to rekindle the pride and zeal and hope of an ancient day. Excuse me for saying it, Herschel, but there are few in his congregation who understand him. Their vision is so obscured by this dense fog of modern indifference that they fail to appreciate his aims. They are still in the outer courts, among the tables of the money-changers, and those who sell doves. They have never entered the inner sanctuary of a spiritual life. Their religion stops with the altar and the censer—the material things. Understand me," he said hastily, as David interrupted him, "I know there are a number you have in mind, who are loyally true to the spirit of Judaism, but they are few and far between. I am not speaking of them, but of the great mass of the congregation. I believe the serv-

ices of the synagogue, and their religion itself, is only a form observed from a cold sense of duty, merely to avert the evil decree."

David drew himself up rather stiffly.

"And you are the disciple of the man who said, 'Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone!' What do you suppose the Jew has to say about the dead-heads in your Churches? What proportion of your membership has passed beyond the tables of the money-changers? How many in your pews, who mumble the creed and wear the label 'Christian,' will be able at the passages of God's Jordan to meet the challenge of his Shibboleth?"

Marion laid his hand on David's shoulder. "You misunderstand me, my boy," he said. "I have no harsher denunciation for the indifferent Jew than for the indifferent Christian. God pity them both! I was simply drawing a contrast between Rabbi Barthold and his people, as it appears to me—a shepherd who longs to lead his flock up to the source of all living water; but they prefer to dispense with climbing the spiritual heights, jostle each other for the richest herbage of the lowlands, and are satisfied. You know that is so, David."

"Yes," admitted David, with a sigh. "He can not even arouse them to the necessity of teaching their children Hebrew, if they would perpetuate loyalty to its traditions."

David was about to repeat what the Rabbi had said the night he consented to take the Hebrew class, but his pride checked him: "What are we coming to, my son? Protestantism is having a wonderful awakening in regard to the study of the Bible. Never has there been such a widespread interest in it as now. But among our people, how many of the younger generation make it a text-book of daily study? Such negligence will surely write its 'Ichabod' upon the future of our beloved Israel."

"What a discussion we have drifted into!" exclaimed Mr. Marion. "I had only intended dropping in here to ask you a simple question. Come to think, I believe I have not answered yours. You asked me my opinion of Rabbi Barthold. Well, I think he is a sincere, noble soul, a true seeker of the truth, and a man whose friendship I would value very highly."

Herschel looked much pleased.

"I hope you may be able to hear him on 'Yom Kippur,'" he said.

"I shall certainly try to be there," Marion answered.

As his footsteps died away in the hall, David said to himself: "If every Gentile were like that man, and every Jew like Uncle Ezra, what an ideal state of society there would be! But then," he added as an after-thought, "what would become of the lawyers? We would starve."

. . . . . .

In the waning light of the afternoon, that Day of the Atonement, there was no more devout worshiper in all the temple than George Cragmore. He had just finished reading a book of M. Leroy Beaulieu's, "Israel Among the Nations," and as he turned the leaves of the prayer-book some one handed him, he was impressed with the truth of this sentence which recurred to him:

"The Hebrew genius was confined to a narrow bed between two rocky walls, whence only the sky could be seen; but it channeled there a well so deep that the ages have not dried it up, and the nations of the four corners of the earth have come to slake their thirst at its waters."

It seemed to him that all that was purest,

most heart-searching and sublime in the Old Covenant; all that time has proven most precious and comforting of its promises; all therein that best satisfies the human yearnings toward the Infinite, and gives wings to the God-instinct in man, might be found somewhere in the exquisite mosaic of this day's ritual.

Marion, concentrating his attention chiefly on the sermons, admired their scholarly style, and indorsed most of their substance, but he came away with a feeling of sadness.

It seemed so pitiful to him to see these people with their backs turned on the sacrifice a divine love had already provided, trying to make their own empty-handed atonement, simply by their penitent pleadings and good deeds.

Herschel's devotions were interfered with by a spirit of criticism heretofore unknown to him. His thoughts were so full of doubts that had been having an almost imperceptible growth that he could not enter into the service with his usual abandon. He was continually contrasting those around him with that never-to-be-forgotten gathering on Lookout, and the congregation in the tent.

What made them to differ? He could not tell, but he felt that something was lacking here that had made the other such a force.

Cragmore had not been able to attend the Friday night service, nor the one on the following morning. He came in just after the noon recess, and was ushered to a pew near the center of the room, where he immediately became absorbed in the ritual. He followed devoutly through the meditations and the silent devotions, and when they came to the responsive readings, his voice joined in as earnestly as any son of Abraham there.

The synagogue, with its modern trappings and fashionably-dressed congregation, seemed to disappear. He saw the old Temple take its place, with its solemn ceremonials of scapegoat and burnt-offering. Through the chanting of the choir in the gallery back of him he heard the thousand-voiced song of the Levites. He seemed to see the clouds of incense, and the smoke arising from the high brazen altar. He bowed his head on the seat in front of him. His whole soul seemed to go out in reverent adoration to this great Jehovah, worshiped by both Hebrew and Christian.

The memorial service to the dead followed the sermon.

Cragmore's music-loving nature responded like a quivering harp-string as the choir began a minor chant:

"Oh what is man, the child of dust?
What is man, O Lord?"

The low, moaning tones of the great organ rose and fell like the beat of a far-off tide, as all heads bowed in silent devotion, recalling in that moment the lives that had passed out into the great beyond.

Cragmore whispered a fervent prayer of thankfulness for the unbroken family circle across the wide Atlantic.

As he did so, a breath of blossoming hawthorn hedges, a faint chiming of the Shandon bells, and the blue mists of the Kerry hills seemed to mingle a moment with his prayer.

The sun had set, when in the concluding service his eyes fell on the words the Rabbi was reading—The Mission of Israel—"It 's a pity," he thought, "that every mentally cross-eyed Christian, who, between ignorance and bigotry, can get only a distorted impression of the Jews,

could n't have heard this service to-day, especially that prayer for all mankind, and this one he is reading now:

" 'This twilight hour reminds us also of the eventide, when, according to Thy gracious promise, Thy light will arise over all the children of men, and Israel's spiritual descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the heaven. Endow us, our Guardian, with strength and patience for our holy mission. Grant that all the children of Thy people may recognize the goal of our changeful career, so that they may exemplify, by their zeal and love for mankind, the truth of Israel's watchword: One humanity on earth, even as there is but one God in heaven. Enlighten all that call themselves by Thy name with the knowledge that the sanctuary of wood and stone, that erst crowned Zion's hill, was but a gate, through which Israel should step out into the world, to reconcile all mankind unto Thee! Thou alone knowest when this work of atonement shall be completed; when the day shall dawn in which the light of Thy truth, brighter than that of the visible sun, shall encircle the whole earth. But surely that great day of universal reconciliation, so fervently prayed for,

shall come, as surely as none of Thy words return empty, unless they have done that for which Thou didst send them. Then joy shall thrill all hearts, and from one end of the earth to the other shall echo the gladsome cry: Hear, O Israel, hear all mankind, the Eternal our God, the Eternal is One. Then myriads will make pilgrimage to Thy house, which shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, and from their lips shall sound in spiritual joy: Lord, open for us the gates of thy truth. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, for the King of glory shall come in.'"

And the choir chanting, replied:

"Who is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts. He is the King of glory."

There was a short prayer, then a benediction that made Cragmore and Marion look across the congregation at each other and smile. It was the Epworth benediction, with which the League was always dismissed:

"May the Lord bless thee, and keep thee. May the Lord let his countenance shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee! The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

The two men met each other at the door, and walked homeward together through the twilight.

Cragmore had found a boarding place. It was not far from the temple.

"Come up to my room," he said to Marion. "I see you still have Herschel's prayer-book with you. I want to compare the mission of Israel as given there with the one I was reading to-day of Leroy-Beaulieu's. I have never known before to-day what special hope they clung to. Come in and I will find the paragraph."

He lighted the gas in his room, pushed a chair over towards his guest, and, seating himself, began rapidly turning the leaves of the book.

"Here it is," he said, and he read as follows:

"Then at last Jewish faith, freed from all tribal spirit and purified of all national dross, will become the law of humanity. The world that jeered at the long suffering of Israel, will witness the fulfillment of prophecies delayed for twenty centuries by the blindness of the scribes, and the stubbornness of the rabbis. According to the words of the prophets, the nations will come to learn of Israel, and the people will hang

to the skirts of her garments, crying, 'Let us go up together to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the Lord of Israel, that he may teach us to walk in his ways.' The true spiritual religion, for which the world has been sighing since Luther and Voltaire, will be imparted to it through Israel. To accomplish this, Israel needs but to discard her old practices, as in spring the oak shakes off the dead leaves of winter. The divine trust, the legacy of her prophets, which has been preserved intact beneath her heavy ritual, will be transmitted to the Gentiles by an Israel emancipated from all enslavement to form. Then only, after having infused the spirit of the Thora into the souls of all men, will Israel, her mission accomplished, be able to merge herself in the nations."

"See what a hopeless hope," said Cragmore, as he closed the book. "And yet do you know, Frank, I am becoming more and more sure that Israel has some great part to play in the conversion of humanity? Any one must see that nothing short of Divine power could have kept them intact as a race, and Divine power is never aimlessly exerted. There must be some great reason for such a miraculous preservation. What mis-

sionaries of the cross these people would make! What torch-bearers they have been! They have carried the altar-fires of Jehovah to every alien shore they have touched."

Cragmore stood up in his earnestness, his eyes alight with something akin to prophetic fire.

"The old thorny stem of Judaism shall yet bud and blossom into the perfect flower of Christianity!" he cried. "And when it does, O when it does, the 'chosen people' will become a veritable tree of life, whose leaves will be 'for the healing of the nations.'"

CHAPTER XII.

DR. TRENT.

T was a cold, bleak night in November. There was a blazing wood-fire on the library hearth. Bethany sat in a low chair in front of it, with a large, flat book in her lap, which she was using as a desk for her long-neglected letter-writing. An appetizing smell of pop-corn and boiling molasses found its way in from the cozy kitchen, where the sisters were treating Jack to an old-fashioned candy-pulling. The occasional gusts that rattled the windows made Bethany draw closer to the fire, with a grateful sense of warmth and comfort. She thoroughly appreciated her luxurious surroundings, and was glad she had the long, quiet evening ahead of her.

For half an hour the steady trail of her pen along the paper, and the singing of the kettle on the crane, was all that was audible.

Then Jack came wheeling himself in, with a radiant, sticky face, and a plate of candy.

"O, we 're having such lots of fun!" he cried. "We 're going to make some chocolate creams now. Do come and help, sister?"

She pointed to the pile of unanswered letters on the table. "I must get these out of the way first," she said. "Then I 'll join you."

"I guess you can eat and write at the same time," he answered, holding out the plate.

He waited only long enough for her to taste his wares, and hurried back to the kitchen to report her opinion of their skill as confectioners.

Just as the dining-room door banged behind him, she thought she heard some one coming up on the front porch with slow, uncertain steps. She paused in the act of dipping her pen into the ink, and listened. Some one certainly tried the bell, but it did not ring. Then the outside door opened and shut. She started up slightly alarmed, and half way across the room stopped again to listen. There was a momentary rustling in the hall. She heard something drop on the hat-rack. Then there was a low knock at the library door. She opened it a little way, and saw Dr. Trent standing there.

"O, Uncle Doctor!" she cried, throwing the

door wide open. "I never once thought of its being you. I took you for a burglar."

Then she stopped, seeing the worn, haggard look on his face. He seemed to have grown ten years older since the last time she had seen him. Without noticing her proffered hand, he pushed slowly past her, and stood shivering before the fire. He had taken off his overcoat in the hall. He was bent and careworn, as if some unusual weight had been laid upon his patient shoulders, already bowed to the limit of their strength.

Bethany knew from his firmly set lips and stern face that he was in sore need of comfort.

"What is it, Uncle Doctor?" she asked, following him to the fire, and laying her hand lightly on his trembling arm. She felt that something dreadful must have happened to unnerve him so. "What can I do for you?" she asked with a tremble of distress in her voice.

He dropped into a chair and covered his face with his hands. When he raised his head his eyes were blurred, and he had that helpless, childish look that comes with premature age.

"I have been with Isabel all day," he said, huskily.

Although Bethany had never heard Mrs. Trent's given name before, she knew that he was speaking of his wife.

There was a long pause, which she finally broke by saying, "Do n't you see her every day? I thought you were in the habit of going out to her that often."

"O, I have gone there," he answered wearily, "day after day, and day after day, all these long years; but I have never seen Isabel. It has only been a poor, mad creature, who never recognized me. She was always calling for me. The way she used to rave, and pray to be sent back to her husband, would have touched a heart of flint; yet she never knew me when I came. She would grow quiet when I put my arm around her, but she would sit and stare at me in a dumb, confused way that was pitiful. I always hoped that some day she might recognize me. I would sing her old songs to her, and talk about our old home, although the thought of its shattered happiness broke my heart. I tried in every way to bring her to herself. She would listen awhile, and look up at me with a recognition almost dawning in her eyes. Then the tears would begin to roll down her cheeks, and she would beg

me to go and find her husband. Yesterday she knew me!" His voice broke. "She came back to me for the first time in eight years,—my own little Isabel! I knew it was only because the frail body was worn out with its terrible struggle, and I could not keep her long. O, such a day as this has been! I have held her in my arms every moment, with her poor, tired head against my heart. She was so glad and happy to find herself with me at last, but the happiness was over so soon."

He buried his face in his hands as before, with a groan. When he spoke again, it was in a dull, mechanical way.

"She died at sundown!"

The tears were running down Bethany's face. She had been standing behind his chair. Now she bent over him, lightly passing her hand over his gray hair, with a comforting caress.

"If I could only do something," she exclaimed, in a voice tremulous with sympathy.

"You can," he answered. "That is why I came. None of her relatives are living. Only my most intimate friends know that she did not die eight years ago, when she was taken away to a sanitarium. I want—" he stopped with a

choking in his throat. "The attendants have been very kind, but I want some woman of her own station—some woman who would have been her friend—to put flowers about her—and—smooth her hair, as she would have wanted it done—and—and—see that everything is all fine and beautiful when she is dressed for her last sleep."

He tried to keep his voice steady as he talked; but his face was working pitifully, and the tears were rolling down his face.

"She would have wished it so. She knew Richard Hallam. He was my best friend. I do not know any one I could ask to do this for my little Isabel, but Richard Hallam's daughter."

She leaned over and touched his forehead with her lips.

"Then let her have a daughter's place in helping you bear this," she said. "Let her serve her father's dear, old friend as she would have served that father."

He reached up and mutely took her hand, resting his face against it a moment, as if the touch of its sympathy strengthened him. Then

he rose, saying, "I shall send for you in the morning."

"O, are you going home so soon?" she exclaimed. "You have hardly been here long enough to get thoroughly warm."

"No, not home, but back to Isabel. It will be only a few hours longer that I can sit beside her. I have staid away now longer than I intended, but I had to come in town to see that Lee was all right."

"O, does he know?" asked Bethany.

"No, he was only two years old when they were separated. She has always been dead to him. Poor, little fellow! Why should I shadow his life with such a grief?"

Bethany helped him on with his overcoat, turned up the collar, and buttoned it securely. Then she gave him his gloves; but instead of putting them on, he stood snapping the clasps in an absent-minded way.

"I suppose Richard told you about that debt I have been wrestling with so long," he said, finally. "I got that all paid off last week, the last wretched cent. And now that Isabel is gone, I seem to have lost all my old vigor and ambition.

If it were not for Lee, it would be so good to stop, and not try to take another step. I should like to lie down and go to sleep, too."

He opened the door. A raw, cold wind, laden with snow, rushed in.

Bethany watched him out of sight, then went shivering back to the fire.

A deep snowstorm kept Jack at home next day, so no one questioned, or no one knew why Bethany was excused from the office during the morning.

She carried out Dr. Trent's wishes faithfully. She stood beside him in the dreary cemetery till the white snow was laid back over the newly-made mound. Then she rode silently back to town with him. He sat with his hands over his eyes all the way, never speaking until the carriage stopped at the office, and the driver opened the door for Bethany to alight.

Next day she saw him drive past on his usual round of professional visits. No one else noticed any difference in him, except that he seemed a little graver, and, if possible, more tender and thoughtful in his ministrations, than he had been before.

To Bethany there was something very pa-

thetic in the sudden aging of this man, who had borne his burden so silently and bravely that few had ever suspected he had one.

He was making a stern effort to keep on in the same old way. His profession had brought him in contact with so much of the world's sorrow and suffering that he would not lay even the shadow of his burden on other lives, if he could help it.

Only Bethany noticed that his hair was fast growing white, that he stooped more, and that he climbed slowly and heavily into the buggy, instead of springing in as he used to, with a quick, elastic step. She ministered to his comfort in all the little ways in her power, but it was not much that any one could do.

It must have been nearly two weeks before he came again to the house. This time it was to examine Jack.

"What would you say, my son," he asked, "if I should tell you I do not want you to go to the office any more after this week?"

Jack's face was a study. The tears came to his eyes. "Why?" he asked.

"Because you will be strong enough then to go through a certain exercise I want you to take

many times during the day. If you keep it up faithfully, I believe you will be walking by Christmas."

This was so much sooner than either Jack or Bethany had dared hope, that they hardly knew how to express their joy. Jack gave a loud whoop, and went wheeling out of the room at the top of his speed to tell Miss Caroline and Miss Harriet.

Dr. Trent looked after him with a fatherly tenderness in his face. Then he sighed and turned to Bethany. "I have another trouble to bring to you, my dear. Lee has been getting into so much mischief lately. I never knew till yesterday that he has not been attending school regularly this term. You see every allowance ought to be made for the child—no home but a boarding-house; no one to take an oversight—for I am called out night and day. He is such a bright boy, so full of life and spirit. I am satisfied that his teachers do not understand him. They have not been fair with him. He has been transferred from one ward to another, and finally expelled. He never told me until last night. He said he knew it would grieve me, and that he put it off from day to day, because he did not

want to trouble me when I was so worried over several critical cases. That showed a sweet spirit, Bethany. I appreciated it. He has always been such an affectionate little chap. I wanted to go and interview the superintendent; but he insisted it would do no good, because they are all prejudiced against him. I know Lee is a good child. They ought not to expect a growing boy, full of the animal spirits the Creator has endowed him with, to always work like a prim little machine. Maybe I am not acting wisely, but he begged so hard to be allowed to go to work for awhile, instead of being sent to any other school, that I gave my consent. It is little a ten-year old boy can do, but he has a taking way with him, and he got a place himself. He is to be elevator-boy in the same building where your office is. You will see him every day, and I am giving you the true state of affairs, so you will not misjudge the child. I hope you will look out a little for him, Bethany."

"You may be sure I shall do that," she promised. "We are already great friends. He used to often join us on his way to school, and wheel Jack part of the distance."

Jack made as much as possible of the remain-

ing time that he was allowed to go to the office. He studied no lessons but the short Hebrew exercises David still gave him. He called at all the different offices where he had made friends, and spent a great deal of time in the hall, talking to Lee, who was soon installed in the building as elevator-boy.

"My! but Lee has been fooling his father," exclaimed Jack to Bethany after his first interview. "Dr. Trent thinks he is such a little angel, but you ought to hear the things he brags about doing. He 's tough, I can tell you. He smokes cigarettes, and swears like a trooper. He showed me an old horse-pistol he won at a game of 'seven up.' He shoots 'craps,' too. He has been playing hooky half his time. One of the hostlers at the livery-stable, where his father keeps his horse, used to write his excuses for him. Lee paid him for it with tobacco he stole out of one of the warehouses down by the river. You just ought to see the book he carries around in his pocket to read when he is n't busy. It 's called 'The Pirate's Revenge; or, A Murderer's Romance.' There is the awfulest pictures in it of people being stabbed, and women cutting their throats. I told him he showed mighty poor taste in the

stuff he read, and asked him how he would like to be found dead with such a thing in his pocket. He told me to shut up preaching, and said the reason he has gone to work is to save up money so 's he could go to Chicago or New York, or some big place, and have a 'howling good time.' "

It made Bethany sick at heart to think of the deception the boy had practiced on his father. Much as she trusted Jack, she could not bear to encourage any intimacy between the boys, and was glad when the time came for him to stay at home from the office. But in every way she could she strengthened her friendship with Lee. She brought him great, rosy apples, and pop-corn balls that Jack had made. No ten-year-old boy could be proof against the long twists of home-made candy she frequently slipped into his pocket. Sometimes when the weather was especially stormy and bleak outside, she stopped to put a bunch of violets or a little red rose in his button-hole. She was so pretty and graceful that she awakened the dormant chivalry within him, and he would not for worlds have had her suspect that he was not all his father believed him to be.

One day she told David enough of his his-

tory to enlist his sympathy. After that the young lawyer began to take considerable notice of him, and finally won his complete friendship by the gift of a little brown puppy, that he brought down one morning in his overcoat pocket.

There was no more time to read "The Pirate's Revenge." The helpless, sprawling little pup demanded all his attention. He kept it swung up in a basket in the elevator, when he was busy, but spent every spare moment trying to develop its limited intelligence by teaching it tricks. That was one occupation of which he never wearied, and in which he never lost patience. From the moment he took the soft, warm, little thing in his arms, he loved it dearly.

"I shall call him Taffy," he said, hugging it up to him, "because he 's so sweet and brown."

Bethany had intended for Dr. Trent and Lee to dine with them on Thanksgiving day, but the sisters were invited to Mrs. Dameron's, and Mrs. Marion was so urgent for her and Jack to spend the day with them, that she reluctantly gave up her plan.

"I shall certainly have them Christmas," she

promised herself, "and a big tree for Lee and Jack. Lois will help me with it."

It was a genuine Thanksgiving-day, with gray skies, and snow, to intensify the indoor cheer.

"Did n't the altar look beautiful this morning with its decorations of fruit and vegetables, and those sheaves of wheat?" remarked Miss Harriet. She had just come home from Mrs. Dameron's, and was holding her big mink muff in front of the fire to dry. She had dropped it in the snow.

"Yes, and was n't that salad-dressing fine?" chimed in Miss Caroline. "Sally always did have a real talent for such things."

"It could n't have been any better than we had," insisted Jack. "I do n't believe I 'll want anything more to eat for a week."

"That 's very fortunate," answered Miss Caroline, "for I gave Mena an entire holiday. We 'll only have a cup of tea, and I can make that in here."

They sat around the fire in the gloaming, quietly talking over the happy day. One of Bethany's greatest causes for thanksgiving was

that these two gentle lives had come in contact with her own. Their simple piety and childlike faith sweetened the atmosphere around them, like the modest, old-fashioned garden-flowers they loved so dearly. Well for Bethany that she had the constant companionship of these loving sisters. Happy for Jack that he found in them the gracious grandmotherly tenderness, without which no home is complete. They were very proud of their boy, as they called him. Between the Junior League and their conscientious instruction, Jack was pretty firmly "rooted and grounded" in the faith of his fathers. Night stole on so gradually, and the firelight filled the room with such a cheerful glow, they did not notice how dark it had grown outside, until a sudden peal of the door-bell startled them.

"I 'll go," said Miss Caroline, adjusting the spectacles that had slipped down when the sudden sound made her start nervously up from her chair. She waited to light the gas, and hastily arrange the disordered chairs.

When she opened the door she saw David Herschel patiently awaiting admittance. It was the first time he had ever called. She was

all in a flutter of surprise as she ushered him into the library. He declined to take a seat.

"I have just come home from Dr. Trent's," he said. "You know he boards across the street from Rabbi Barthold's, where I have been spending the day. He was called out to see a patient last night, and came home late, with a hard chill. Lee saw me coming out of the gate a little while ago, and came running over to tell me. He had been out skating all morning. After dinner, when he went up-stairs, he found his father delirious, and had telephoned for Dr. Mills. He was very much frightened, and wanted me to stay with him until the doctor came. As soon as Dr. Mills examined him, he called me aside and asked me to get into his buggy and drive out to the Deaconess Home. I have just come from there," he said, "and Miss Carleton has no case on hands. Tell her if ever she was needed in her life, she is needed now. He has pneumonia, and it has been neglected too long, I 'm afraid. It may be a matter of only a few hours."

Bethany started up, looking so white and alarmed that David thought she was going to faint. He arose. too.

"I must go over there at once," she said.

"It is quite dark," answered David. "I am at your service, if you want me to wait for you."

"O, I shall not keep you waiting a moment," she answered. "Jack, I 'll be back in time to help you to bed."

As she spoke she began putting on her wraps, which were still lying on the chair, where she had thrown them off on coming in, a little while before.

David offered his arm as they went down the icy steps.

"It was so good of you to come at once," she said, as she accepted his assistance. "Is Miss Carleton there now?"

"Yes," he answered, "she was ready almost instantly. She is the same nurse that I met early one morning in that laundry office. She told me on the way back that Dr. Trent has done so much for the Home and for the poor. She says she owes her own life to his skill and care, and that no service she could render him would be great enough to express her gratitude. They all feel that way about him at the Home."

Belle Cartleton met them at the bedroom door. "Dr. Trent has just spoken about you,"

she said in a low tone to Bethany. "He has had several lucid intervals. Take off your hat before you go to him."

Lee sat curled up in a big chair in a dark corner of the room, with Taffy hugged tight in his arms. An undefinable dread had taken possession of him. He looked up at Bethany, with a frightened, tearful expression, as she patted him on the cheek in passing.

Dr. Trent opened his eyes when she sat down beside him, and took his hand. He smiled brightly as he recognized her.

"Richard's little girl!" he said in a hoarse whisper, for he could not speak audibly. "Dear old Dick."

Then he grew delirious again. It was only at intervals he had these gleams of consciousness.

After awhile his eyes closed wearily. He seemed to sink into a heavy stupor. Bethany sat holding his hand, with the tears silently dropping down into her lap as she looked at the worn fingers clasped over hers.

What a world of good that hand had done! How unselfishly it had toiled on for others, to wipe out the brother's disgrace, to surround the little wife with comforts, to provide the boy

with the best of everything! Besides all that, it had filled, as far as lay in its power, every other needy hand, stretched out toward its sympathetic clasp.

She sat beside him a long time, but he did not waken from the heavy sleep into which he had fallen, even when she gently withdrew her fingers, and moved away to let Dr. Mills take her place. He had just come in again.

"Will you need me here to-night, Belle?" asked Bethany.

The nurse turned to Dr. Mills inquiringly. He shook his head. "Miss Carleton can do all that is necessary," he said. "I shall come again about midnight, and stay the rest of the night, if I am needed. He will probably have no more rational awakenings while this fever keeps at such a frightful heat. If we can subdue that soon, he has such great vitality he may pull through all right."

"You 'd better go back, dear," urged the nurse. "You have your work ahead of you to-morrow, and you look very tired."

"I have an almost unbearable headache," admitted Bethany, "or I would not think of leaving. I would not go even for that, if I

thought he would have conscious intervals of any length; but the doctor thinks that is hardly probable to-night. I 'll come back early in the morning. Maybe he will know me then."

"Are you going, too?" asked Lee, clinging wistfully to David's hand, as Bethany put on her hat.

"Would you like me to stay?" he asked, kindly.

Lee swallowed hard, and winked fast to keep back the tears.

"Everybody else is strangers," he said, with his lip trembling.

David put his arm around him caressingly. His sympathies went out strongly to the little lad, who might so soon be left fatherless.

"Then I 'll come back and stay with you till you go to sleep, after I take Miss Hallam home," he promised.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LITTLE PRODIGAL.

LEE was waiting disconsolately on the stairs, with Taffy beside him, when David opened the door and stepped into the hall. The landlady was upstairs with the nurse, and all the boarders had gone to a concert, so the parlor was vacant, and David took the boy in there. He gave him an intricate chain-puzzle to work first, and afterward told him such entertaining stories of his travels that Lee forgot his painful forebodings. The clock in the hall struck ten before either of them was aware how swiftly the time had passed.

"Here 's a little fellow who does n't know where he is to sleep," David said to the nurse, when they had noiselessly entered Dr. Trent's room.

"We 'll cover him up warm on the sofa," she said, kindly. "He 'd better not undress."

David looked quickly across to the bed. "Is there any change?" he asked, anxiously.

She nodded, and then motioned him aside. "Would it be too much to ask you to stay a couple of hours longer, until Dr. Mills comes? Lee clings to you so, and the end may be much nearer than we thought."

"If I can be of any use, I 'll stay very willingly," he replied.

They moved the sofa to the other side of the room, and the nurse began folding some blankets the landlady brought her to lay over it.

"Can 't you put some more coal on the fire, dear?" she asked Lee.

He picked up a larger lump than he could well manage. The tongs slipped, and it fell with a great noise on the fender, breaking in pieces as it did so, then rattling over the hearth.

They all turned apprehensively toward the bed. The heavy jarring sound had thoroughly aroused Dr. Trent from his stupor. He looked around the room as if trying to comprehend the situation. He seemed puzzled to account for David's presence in the room, and drew his hand wonderingly across his burning forehead, then pressed it against his aching throat.

The nurse bent over him to moisten his parched lips with a spoonful of water.

Then he understood. A look of awe stole over his face, as he realized his condition. He held his hand out towards Lee, and the nurse, turning, beckoned the child to come. He folded the cold, trembling little fingers in his hot hands. "Papa's—dear—little son!" he gasped in whispers.

David turned his head away, his eyes suffused with hot tears. The scene recalled so vividly the night he had crept to his father's bedside for the last time. His heart ached for the little fellow.

"God—keep—you!" came in the same hoarse whisper.

Then he turned to the nurse, and with great effort spoke aloud, "Belle, pray!"

David, standing with bowed head, while she knelt with her arm around the frightened boy, listened to such a prayer as he had never heard before. He had wondered one time how this woman could sacrifice everything in life for the sake of a man who died so many centuries ago. But as he listened now, to her low, earnest voice, he felt an unseen Presence in the room, as of the Christ to whom she spoke so confidingly.

As she prayed that the Everlasting Arms

might be underneath as this soul went down into the "valley of the shadow," the doctor cried out exultingly, "There is no valley!"

David looked up. The doctor's worn face was shining with an unspeakable happiness. He stretched out his arms.

"Jesus saves me! O, the wonder of it!"

His hands dropped. Gradually his eyes closed, and he relapsed into a stupor, from which he never aroused. When Dr. Mills came at midnight he was still breathing; but the street lights were beginning to fade in the gray, wintry dawn when Belle Carleton reverently laid the lifeless hands across the still heart, and turned to look at Lee.

The child had sobbed himself to sleep on the sofa, and David had gone.

. . . . . .

O, the pity of it, that we keep the heart's-ease of our appreciation to wreathe cold coffin-lids, and cover unresponsive clay!

There was a constant stream of people passing in and out of the boarding-house parlor all day.

Bethany was not surprised at the great number who came to do honor to Baxter Trent, nor

at the tearful accounts of his helpful ministrations from those he had befriended. But as she arranged the great masses of flowers they brought, she thought sadly, "O, why did n't they send these when he was in such sore need of love and sympathy? Now it 's too late to make any difference."

All sorts of people came. A man whose wrists had not yet forgotten the chafing of a convict's shackles, touched one of the lilies that Bethany had placed on the table at the head of the casket.

"He lived white!" the man said, shaking his head mournfully. "I reckon he was ready to go if ever any body was."

They happened to be alone in the room, and Bethany repeated what the nurse had told her of the doctor's triumphant passing.

Late in the afternoon there was a timid knock at the door. Bethany opened it, and saw two little waifs holding each other's cold, red hands. One had a ragged shawl pinned over her head, and the other wore a big, flapping sunbonnet, turned back from her thin, pitiful face. Their teeth were chattering with cold and bashfulness.

"Missus," faltered the larger one, "we could n't get no wreaves or crosses, but granny said he would like this 'cause it 's so bright and gold-lookin.' "

The dirty little hand held out a stemless, yellow chrysanthemum.

"Come in, dears," said Bethany softly, opening the door wide to the little ragamuffins.

They glanced around the mass of blossoms filling the room, with a look of astonishment that so much beauty could be found in one place.

"Jess," whispered the oldest one to her sister, "'Pears like our 'n do n't show up for much, beside all these. I wisht he knowed we walked a mile through the snow to fetch it, and how sorry we was."

Bethany heard the disappointed whisper. "Did you know him well?" she asked.

"I should rather say," answered the child. "He kep' us from starvin', all the time granny was down sick so long."

"An' once he took me and Jess ridin' with him, away out in the country, and he let us get out in a field and pick lots of yellow flowers, something like this, only littler. Did n't he, Jess?"

The other child nodded, saying, as she wiped her eyes with the corner of her sister's shawl, "Granny says we 'll never have another friend like him while the world stands."

Deeply touched, Bethany held up the stemless chrysanthemum. "See," she said, "I 'm going to put it in the best place of all, right here by his hand."

The door opened again to admit David Herschel. Before it closed the children had slipped bashfully away, still hand in hand.

Bethany told him of their errand. "Who could have brought more?" she said, touching the shining yellow flower; "for with this little drop of gold is the myrrh of a childish grief, and the frankincense of a loving remembrance."

She felt that he could appreciate the pathos of the gift, and the love that prompted it. They had grown so much closer together in the last twenty-four hours.

"You 've been here nearly all day, have n't you?" he asked, noticing her tired face. "I wish you would go home and rest, and let me take your place awhile."

He insisted so kindly that at last she yielded.

Her sympathies had been sorely wrought upon during the day, and she was nearly exhausted.

After she had gone, he sat down with his overcoat on, near the front window. There was only a smoldering remnant of a fire in the grate.

The last rays of the sunset were streaming in between the slats of the shutters. He could hear the boys playing in the snowy streets, and the occasional tinkle of passing sleighbells.

"I wonder where Lee is," he thought. He had not seen the child since morning.

Two working men came in presently. They looked long and silently at the doctor's peaceful face, and tiptoed awkwardly out again.

The minutes dragged slowly by.

The heavy perfume of the flowers made David drowsy, and he leaned his head on his hand.

The door opened cautiously, and Lee looked in. His eyes were swollen with crying. He did not see David sitting back in the shadow. Only one long ray of yellow sunlight shone in now, and it lay athwart the still form in the center of the room.

Lee paused just a moment beside it, then slipped noiselessly over to the grate. There was a pile of books under his arm. He stirred the dying embers as quietly as he could, and one by one laid the books on the red coals. They were the ones Jack had so unreservedly condemned. Last of all he threw on a dogeared deck of cards. They blazed up, filling the room with light, and revealing David in his seat by the window.

"O," cried Lee in alarm, "I did n't know any one was in here."

Then leaning against the wall, he put his head on his arm, and began to sob in deeper distress than he had yet shown. He felt in his pocket for a handkerchief, but there was none there.

David took out his own and wiped the boy's wet face, as he drew him tenderly to his knee.

"Now tell me all about it," he said.

Lee nestled against his shoulder, and cried harder for awhile. Then he sobbed brokenly: "O, I 've been so bad, and he never knew it! I came in here early this morning before anybody was up, to tell him I was sorry—that I would be a good boy—but he was so cold when I touched him, and he could n't answer me! O, papa,

papa!" he wailed. "It 's so awful to be left all alone—just a little boy like me!"

David folded him closer without speaking. No words could touch such a grief.

Presently Lee sat up and unfolded a piece of paper. It was only the scrap of a fly-leaf, its jagged edges showing it had been torn from some school-book.

"Do you think it will hurt if I put this in his pocket?" he asked in a trembling voice. "I want him to take it with him. I felt like if I burned up those books in here, and put this in his pocket, he 'd know how sorry I was."

David took the bit of paper, all blistered with boyish tears, where a penitent little hand, out of the depths of a desolate little heart, had scrawled the promise: "Dear Papa,—I will be good."

A sob shook the man's strong frame as he read it.

"I think he will be very glad to have you give him that," he answered. "You 'd better put it in his pocket before any one comes in."

Lee slipped down from his lap, and crossed the room. "O, I can 't," he moaned, attempting to lift the lifeless hands.

David reached down, and unbuttoning the coat, laid the promise of the little prodigal gently on his father's heart, to await its reading in the glad light of the resurrection morning. Then he called some one else to take his place, and went to telephone for a sleigh. In a little while he was driving through the twilight out one of the white country roads, with Lee beside him, that nature's wintry solitudes might lay a cool hand of healing sympathy on the boy's sore heart.

Bethany took him home with her after the funeral, and kept him a week.

Miss Caroline and Miss Harriet petted him with all the ardor of their motherly old hearts. Jack did his best to amuse him, and with the elasticity of childhood, he began to recover his usual vivacity.

"This can not go on always," Mr. Marion said to Bethany one day. He had gone up to the office to talk to her about it.

Dr. Trent had left a small insurance, requesting that Frank Marion be appointed guardian.

"Ray wants him," continued Mr. Marion. "She would have turned the house into an orphan asylum long ago if I had allowed it. But

she has so many demands on her time and strength that I am unwilling to have her taxed any more. You see, for instance, if we should take Lee, I am away from home so much, that the greater part of the care and responsibility would fall on her. Just now his father's death has touched him, and he is making a great effort to do all right; but it will be a hard fight for him in a big place like this, so full of temptations to a boy of his age. He would be a constant care. The only thing I can see is to put him in some private school for a few years."

"Let me keep him till after Christmas," urged Bethany. "I can't bear to let the little fellow go away among strangers this near the holiday season. I keep thinking, What if it were Jack?"

"How would it do for me to take him out on my next trip?" suggested Mr. Marion. "I will be gone two weeks, just to little country towns in the northern part of the State, where he could have a variety of scenes to amuse him."

"That will be fine!" answered Bethany. "I 'm sure he will like it."

Lee was somewhat afraid of his tall, dignified guardian. He had a secret fear that he

would always be preaching to him, or telling him Bible stories. He hoped that the customers would keep him very busy during the day, and he resolved always to go to bed early enough to escape any curtain lectures that might be in store for him.

To his great relief, Mr. Marion proved the jolliest of traveling companions. There was no preaching. He did not even try to make sly hints at the boy's past behavior by tacking a moral on to the end of his stories, and he only laughed when Taffy crawled out of the innocent-looking brown paper bundle that Lee would not put out of his arms until after the train had started.

Such long sleigh-rides as they had across the open country between little towns! Such fine skating places he found while Mr. Marion was busy with his customers! It was a picnic in ten chapters, he told one of the drivers.

One afternoon, as they drove over the hard, frozen pike, one of the horses began to limp.

"Shoe 's comin' off," said the driver. "Lucky we 're near Sikes's smithy. It 's jes' round the next bend, over the bridge."

The smoky blacksmith-shop, with its flying

sparks and noisy anvils, was nothing new to Lee. He had often hung around one in the city. In fact, there were few places he had not explored.

The smith was a loud, blatant fellow, so in the habit of using rough language that every sentence was accompanied with an oath.

Mr. Marion had taken Lee in to warm by the fire.

"I wonder what that horrible noise is!" he said. They had heard a harsh, grating sound, like some discordant grinding, ever since they came in sight of the shop.

Sikes pointed over his shoulder with his sooty thumb.

"It 's an ole mill back yender. It 's out o' gear somew'eres. It set me plumb crazy at first, but I 'm gettin' used to it now."

"Let 's go over and investigate," said Mr. Marion, anxious to get Lee out of such polluted atmosphere.

The miller, an easy-going old fellow, nearly as broad as he was long, did not even take the trouble to remove the pipe from his mouth, as he answered: "O, that! That 's nothing but just one of the cogs is gone out of one of the wheels.

I keep thinking I 'll get it fixed; but there 's always a grist a-waiting, so somehow I never get 'round to it. Does make an or'nery sound for a fact, stranger; but if I do n't mind it, reckon nobody else need worry."

"Lazy old scoundrel," laughed Mr. Marion, after they had passed out of doors again. "I do n't see how he stands such a horrible noise. It is a nuisance to the whole neighborhood."

When he reported the conversation at the smithy, Sikes swore at the miller soundly.

Frank Marion's eyes flashed, and he took a step forward.

"Look here, Sikes," he exclaimed, in a tone that made every one in the shop pause to listen, "you 've got a bigger cog missing in you than the old mill has, and it makes you a sight bigger nuisance to the neighborhood. You have lost your reverence for all that is holy. You go grinding away by yourself, leaving out God, leaving out Christ, making a miserable failure of your life grist, and every time you open your lips, your blasphemous words tell the story of the missing cog. If that old mill-wheel makes such a hateful sound, what kind of a discord do

you suppose your life is making in the ears of your Heavenly Father?"

Sikes looked at him an instant irresolutely. His first impulse was to knock him over with the heavy hammer he held; but the truth of the fearless words struck home, and he could not help respecting the man who had the courage to utter them.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said at last. "I had no idee you was a parson. I laid out as you was a drummer."

"I am a drummer," answered Marion. "I am a wholesale shoe-merchant now; but I spent so many years on the road for this same house before I went into the firm, that I often go out over my old territory."

Sikes regarded him curiously. "Strikes me you 've got sermons and shoe-leather pretty badly mixed up," he said.

Afterward, when he had watched the sleigh disappear down the road, he picked up the bellows and worked them in an absent-minded sort of a way.

"A drummer!" he repeated under his breath. "A drummer! I 'll be—blowed!"

The incident made a profound impression on Lee. A loop in the road brought them in sight of the old mill again.

"We don't want to have any cogs missing, do we, son!" said Mr. Marion, first pinching the boy's rosy cheek, and then stooping to tuck the buffalo robes more snugly around him.

The subject was not referred to again, but the lesson was not forgotten.

Sunday was passed at a little country hotel. They walked to the Church a mile away in the morning. Time hung heavy on Lee's hands in the afternoon while Mr. Marion was reading. If it had not been for Taffy, it would have been insufferably dull. He had a slight cold, so Mr. Marion did not take him out to the night service. He left him playing with the landlady's baby in the hotel parlor. That amusement did not last long, however. The baby was put to bed, and some of the neighbors came in for a visit. Lee felt out of place, and went up to their room.

It was the best the house afforded, but it was far from being an attractive place. The walls were strikingly white and bare. A hideous green and purple quilt covered the bed. The

rag carpet was a dull, faded gray. The lamp smoked when he turned it up, and smelled strongly of coal-oil when he turned it down.

He felt so lonely and homesick that he concluded to go to bed. It was very early. He could not sleep, but lay there in the dark, listening to somebody's rocking-chair, going squeakety squeak in the parlor below.

He wished he could be as comfortable and content as Taffy, curled up in some flannel in a shoe-box, on a chair beside the bed. He reached out, and stroked the puppy's soft back.

The feeling came over him as he did so, that there was n't anybody in all the world for him really to belong to.

It was the first time since Bethany took him home that he had felt like crying. Now he lay and sobbed softly to himself till he heard Mr. Marion's step on the stairs.

He grew quiet then, and kept his eyes closed. Mr. Marion lighted the lamp, putting a high-backed chair in front of it, so that it could not shine on the bed. He picked up his Bible that was lying on the table, and, turning the leaves very quietly that he might not disturb Lee, found the night's lesson.

A stifled sniffle made him pause. After a long time he heard another. Laying down his book, he stepped up to the bed. Lee was perfectly motionless, but the pillow was wet, and his face streaked with traces of tears. Marion, with his hands thrust in his pockets, stood looking at him.

All the fatherly impulses of his nature were stirred by the pitiful little face on the pillow.

He knelt down and put his strong arm tenderly over the boy.

"Lee," he said, "look up here, son."

Lee glanced timidly at the bearded face so near his own.

"You were lying here in the dark, crying because you felt that there was nobody left to love you. Now put your arms around my neck, dear, while I tell you something. I had a little child once. I can never begin to tell you how I loved her. When she died it nearly broke my heart. But I said, for her sake I shall love all children, and try to make them happy. Because her little feet knew the way home to God, I shall try to keep all other children in the same pure path. For her sake, first, I loved you;

now, since we have been together, for your own. I want you to feel that I am such a close friend that you can always come to me just as freely as you did to your father."

The boy's clasp around his neck tightened.

"But, Lee, there will be times in your life when you will need greater help than I can give; and because I know just how you will be tried, and tempted, and discouraged, I want you to take the best of friends for your own right now. I want you to take Jesus. Will you do this?"

Lee hesitated, and then said in a half-frightened whisper, "I do n't know how."

"Did you ever ask your papa to forgive you after you had been very naughty?" asked Mr. Marion.

"O yes," cried Lee, "but it was too late." Between his choking sobs he told of the promise lying on his father's heart, in the far-off grave under the cemetery cedars.

Mr. Marion controlled his voice with an effort, as he pointed out the way so surely and so simply that Lee could not fail to understand.

Then, with his arm still around him, he prayed; and the boy, following him step by step

through that earnest prayer, groped his way to his Savior.

It was a time never to be forgotten by either Frank Marion or Lee. They lay awake till long after midnight, too happy even to think of sleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

HERZENRUHE.

STORY has come down to us of a cricket that, hidden away in an old oak chest, found its way to the New World in the hold of the Mayflower. When night came, and the strange loneliness of those winter wilds made the bravest heart appalled; when little children held with homesick longing to their mother's hands, and talked of England's bonny hedgerows, then the brave little cricket came out on the hearthstone; and its familiar chirp, bringing back the cheer of the happy past, comforted the children, and sang new hopes into the hearts of their elders.

With every vessel that has touched the New World's shores since that time have come these fireside voices. Whether stowed away in the ample chests of the first Virginians, or bound in the bundles of the last steerage passengers just landed at Castle Garden, some quaint custom of a distant Fatherland has always folded its

wings, ready to chirp on the new hearthstone, the familiar even-song of the old.

That is how the American celebration of Christmas has become so cosmopolitan in its character. It is a chorus of all the customs that, cricket-like, have journeyed to us, each with its song of an "auld lang syne."

"I should like to have a little of everything this year," remarked Miss Caroline, as, pencil in hand, she prepared to make a long memorandum.

It was two weeks before Christmas, and she had called a family council in her room, after Jack had gone to bed.

Mrs. Marion and Lois were there, busily embroidering.

"It is the first time we have had a home of our own for so many years, or been where there is a child in the family," added Miss Harriet, "that we ought to make quite an occasion of it."

"Now, my idea," remarked Miss Caroline, "is to begin back with the mistletoe of the Druids, and then the holly and plum-pudding of old England. I 'm sorry we can't have the Yule log and the wassail-bowl and the dear little

Christmas waits. It must have been so lovely. But we can have a tree Christmas eve, with all the beautiful German customs that go with it. Jack must hang up his stocking by the chimney, whether he believes in Santa Claus or not. Then we must read up all the Scandinavian and Dutch and Flemish customs, and observe just as many as we can."

"And all this just for Jack and Lee," said Mrs. Marion, thoughtfully.

"Bless you, no," exclaimed Miss Caroline. "Jack is going to invite ten poor children that the Junior Mercy and Help Department have reported. He is so grateful for being able to walk a little, that he wants to give up his whole Christmas to them."

"What do you want me to do?" asked Lois. "I 'm through with my last present now, and am ready for anything, from serving a dinner to the slums to playing a bagpipe for its entertainment."

As she spoke she snipped the last thread of silk with her little silver scissors, and tossed the piece of embroidery into Bethany's lap.

Bethany spread it out admiringly. "You

are a true artist, Lois," she said. "These sweet peas look as if they had just been gathered. They would almost tempt the bees."

"They 're not as natural as Ray's buttercups," answered Lois. "You can't guess whom she 's making that table-cover for?"

Mrs. Marion held it up for them to see. "For that dear old grandmother where we were entertained at Chattanooga last summer," she said. "Do n't you remember Mrs. Warford, Bethany? She could n't hear well enough to enjoy the meetings, or to talk to us much, but her face was a perpetual welcome. She asked me into her room one day, and showed me a great bunch of red clover some one had sent her from the country. She seemed so pleased with it, and told me about the clover chains she used to make, and the buttercups she used to pick in the meadows at home, with all the artlessness of a child. That is why I chose this design."

"There never was another like you, Cousin Ray," said Bethany. "You remember everything and everybody at Christmas, and I do n't see how you ever manage to get through with so much work."

"Love lightens labor," quoted Miss Harriet,

sententiously. "At least that 's what my old copy-book used to say."

"And it also said, if I remember aright," said Miss Caroline, a little severely, " 'Plan out your work, and work out your plan.' It 's high time we were settling down to business, if we expect to accomplish anything."

While this Christmas council was in session in Miss Caroline's room, another was being held in an old farm-house in the northern part of the State, by Gottlieb Hartmann's wife and daughter. Everything in the room gave evidence of German thrift and neatness, from the shining brass andirons on the hearth, to the geraniums blooming on the window-sill.

"Herzenruhe" was the name of the home Gottlieb Hartmann had left behind him in the Fatherland, when he came to America a poor emigrant boy; and that was the name now carved on the arch that spanned the wide entrance-gate, leading to the home and the well-tilled acres that he had earned by years of steady, honest toil.

It was indeed "heart's-ease," or heart-rest, to every wayfarer sheltered under its ample roof-tree.

He had accumulated his property by careful economy, but he gave out with the same conscientious spirit with which he gathered in. No matter when the summons might come, at nightfall or at cock-crowing, he was ready to give an account of his faithful stewardship. Not only had he divided his bread with the hungry, but he had given time and personal care, and a share in his own home-life, to those who were in need.

More than one young farmer, jogging past Herzenruhe in a wagon of his own, looked gratefully up the long lane, and remembered that he owed the steady habits of his manhood and his present prosperity to Gottlieb Hartmann. For in all the years since he had had a place of his own, there had seldom been a time when some homeless boy or another had not been a member of his household.

He was an old man now, white-haired and rheumatic, and called grandfather by all the country side; but he was still young at heart, sweet and sound to the very core, like a hardy winter apple. His children had all married and gone farther West, except his oldest daughter, Carlotta, whom no one had ever been able to

lure away from her comfortable home-nest. She was an energetic, self-willed little body, and had gradually assumed control until the entire household revolved around her. Just now she had wheeled her sewing-machine beside the table, on which the evening lamp stood, and was preparing to dress a whole family of dolls to be packed in the Christmas boxes that were soon to be sent West.

Her mother sat on one side of the fireplace, her sweet, wrinkled old face bright with the loving thoughts that her needles were putting into a little red mitten, destined for one of the boxes.

"It will be the first Christmas since I can remember," said Carlotta, "that there will be no little ones here, and no tree to light. Ben's boy was here last year, and all of Mary's children the year before. It 's a pity they are so far away. It will just spoil my Christmas."

Mr. Hartmann laid down the German Advocate he was reading.

"Ach, Lotta," he said, "I forgot to tell you. There will be a little lad here to-morrow to take dinner with us. When I was in town to-day I

met our good friend, Frank Marion, and he had a boy with him whose father is just dead, and he is the guardian."

"How many years has it been since Mr. Marion first came here?" asked Carlotta. "Seems to me I was only a little girl, and now I have pulled out lots of gray hairs already."

"It has been twenty years at least," answered her mother. "It was while we were building the ice-house, I know."

"Yes," assented her husband, "I had gone into Ridgeville one Saturday to get some new boots, and I met him in the shoestore. He was just a young fellow making his first trip, and he seemed so strange and homesick that when I found he was a country boy and a strong Methodist, I brought him out here to stay over Sunday with us."

"I remember you brought him right into the kitchen where I was dropping noodles in the soup," answered Mrs. Hartmann, "and he has seemed to feel like one of the family ever since."

"Yes, he has never missed coming out here every time he has been in this part of the State, from that day to this," said Mr. Hartmann, taking up his paper again.

Meanwhile, in the Ridgeville Hotel, three miles away, Mr. Marion was telling Lee of all the pleasant things that awaited him at Herzenruhe. The boy was so impatient to start that he could hardly wait for the time to come, and he dreamed all night of the country.

Mr. Marion saw very little of him during the visit. The delighted child spent all his time in the barn, or in the dairy, helping Miss Carlotta. "O, I wish we did n't ever have to go away," he said. "There 's the dearest little colt in the barn, and six Holstein calves, and a big pond in the pasture covered with ice!"

Later he confided to Mr. Marion, "Miss Carlotta makes doughnuts every Saturday, and she says there 's bushels of hickory-nuts in the garret."

When Miss Carlotta found that Mr. Marion was going on to the next town before starting home, she insisted on keeping Lee until his return.

"Let him get some of 'the sun and wind into his pulses.' It will be good for him," she said.

"Nobody knows better than I," answered Mr. Marion, "the sweet wholesomeness of country living. I should be glad to leave him

in such an atmosphere always. He would develop into a much purer manhood, and I am sure would be far happier."

Miss Carlotta shook her head sagely. "We 'll see," she said. "Do n't say anything to him about it, but we 'll try him while you 're gone, and then I 'll talk to father. He seems right handy about the chores, and there is a good school near here."

Two days later, when Mr. Marion came back, he went out to the barn to find Lee. The boy had just scrambled out of a haymow with his hat full of eggs. His face was beaming.

"I 've learned to milk," he said proudly, "and I rode to the post-office this afternoon, horseback."

"Do you like it here, my boy?" asked Mr. Marion.

"Like it!" repeated Lee, emphatically. "Well I should say! Mr. Hartmann is just the grandfatheriest old grandfather I ever knew, and they 're all so good to me."

It proved to be a very eventful journey for the boy; for after some discussion about his board, it was arranged that he should come back to the farm after the holidays.

"Do I have to wait till then?" he asked. "Why could n't I stay right on, now I 'm here. You could send my clothes to me, and it would n't cost near as much as to go home first."

"What will Bethany say?" asked Mr. Marion. "She is planning for a big tree and lots of fun Christmas."

"But papa won't be there," pleaded Lee. "I 'd so much rather stay here than go back to town and find him gone."

"Then you shall stay," exclaimed Miss Carlotta, touched by the expression of his face. "We 'll have a tree here. You can dig one up in the woods yourself."

When Mr. Marion drove away, Lee rode down the lane with him to open the big gate. After he had driven through he turned for one more look.

The boy stood under the archway waving good-bye with his cap. The late afternoon sun shone brightly on the happy face, and illuminated the snow, still clinging to the quaintly carved letters on the arch above, till it seemed they were all golden letters that spelled the name of Herzenruhe.

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This holiday season would have been a sad time for Bethany, had she allowed herself to listen to the voices of Christmas past, but Baxter Trent's example helped her. She turned resolutely away from her memories, saying: "I will be like him. No heart shall ever have the shadow of my sorrow thrown across it."

Full of one thought only, to bring some happiness into every life that touched her own, she found herself sharing the delight of every child she saw crowding its face against the great show windows. She anticipated the pleasure that would attend the opening of each bundle carried by every purchaser that jostled against her in the street. It was impossible for her to breathe the general air of festivity at home, and not carry something of the Christmas spirit to the office with her.

"Everybody has caught the contagion," she said gayly, coming into the office Saturday afternoon, with sparkling eyes, and snowflakes still clinging to her dark furs. "I saw that old bachelor, Mr. Crookshaw, whom everybody thinks so miserly, going along with a little red cart under his arm, and a tin locomotive bulging out of his pocket."

"Jack is missing a great deal," said David, "by not being down-town every day."

"O no, indeed!" she exclaimed. "He is nearly wild now with the excitement of the preparations that are going on at home. That reminds me, he has written a special invitation for you to be present at the lighting of his tree Christmas eve. He put it in my muff, so that I could not possibly forget. I am sure you will enjoy watching the children," she added, after she had told him of their various plans, "and I hope you will be sure to come."

"Thank you," he responded, warmly. "That is the second invitation I have had this afternoon. Mr. Marion has just been in to ask me to attend the League's devotional meeting to-morrow night. He says it will be especially interesting on account of the season, and insists that 'turn about is fair play.' He went to our Atonement-day services, and he wants me to be present at his Christmas services."

"We shall be very glad to have you come," said Bethany. "Dr. Bascom is to lead the meeting instead of any of the young people, who usually take turns. I can not tell how such a

meeting might impress an outsider; to me they are very inspiring and helpful."

That night, as she sat in her room indulging in a few minutes of meditation before putting out the light, she reviewed her acquaintance with David Herschel. Her conscience condemned her for the little use she had made of her opportunity.

It had been four months since he had come into the office, and while they had several times discussed their respective religions, she had never found an occasion when she could make a personal appeal to him to accept Christ. Once when she had been about to do so, he had abruptly walked away, and another time, a client had interrupted them.

"I must speak to him frankly," she said. Then she knelt and prayed that something might be said or sung in the service of the morrow that would prepare the way for such a conversation.

David felt decidedly out of place Sunday evening as he took a seat in the back part of the room, in the least conspicuous corner he could find.

They were singing when he entered. He

recognized the tune. It was the one he had heard at Chattanooga—"Nearer, my God, to Thee." It seemed to bring the whole scene before him—the sunrise—the vast concourse of people, and the earnestness that thrilled every soul.

At the close of the song, another was announced in a voice that he thought he recognized. He leaned forward to make sure. Yes, he had been correct. It was Hewson Raleigh's—one of the keenest, most scholarly lawyers at the bar, and a man he met daily.

He was leaning back in his seat, beating time with his left hand, as he led the tune with his strong tenor voice. He sang as if he heartily enjoyed it, and meant every word and note.

David moved over to make room for a newcomer. From his changed position he could see a number of people he recognized: Mr. and Mrs. Marion, Lois Denning, and the Courtney sisters. Bethany was seated at the piano.

Presently the door from the pastor's study opened, and Dr. Bascom came in and took his seat beside the president of the League.

"Look at Dr. Bascom," he heard some one

behind him whisper to her escort. "What do you suppose could have happened? His face actually shines."

David had been watching it ever since he took his seat. It was a benign, pleasant face at all times, but just now it seemed to have caught the reflection of a great light. Everybody in the room noticed it. David, quick to make Old Testament comparisons, thought of Moses coming down the mountain from a talk with God. He felt as positively, as if he had seen for himself, that the minister had just risen from his knees, and had come in among them, radiant from the unspeakable joy of that communion. Every one present began to feel its influence.

The prophecy Dr. Bascom had chosen for reading, was one they had heard many times, but it seemed a new proclamation as he delivered it:

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."

Something of the gladness that must have rung through the song of the heralds on that first Christmas night, seemed to thrill the minister's voice as he read.

Then he turned to Luke's account of the

shepherds abiding in the fields by night—that beautiful old story, that will always be new until the stars that still shine nightly over Bethlehem shall have ceased to be a wonder.

As the service progressed, David began to feel that he was not in a church, but that he had stumbled by mistake on some family reunion. Everything was so informal. They told the experiences of the past week, the blessings and the trials that had come to them since they had last seen each other.

Sometimes they stood; oftener they spoke from where they sat, just as they would have talked in some home-circle.

And through it all they seemed to recognize a Divine presence in the room, to whom they spoke at intervals with reverence, with humility, but with the deepest love and gratitude.

As David listened to voice after voice testifying to a personal knowledge of Christ as a Savior, he was forced to admit to himself that they possessed something to which he was an utter stranger.

When Hewson Raleigh arose, David listened with still greater interest. He knew him to be an eloquent lawyer, and had heard him a number

of times in rousing political speeches, and once in a masterly oration over the Nation's dead on Memorial-day. He knew what a power the man had with a jury, and he knew what respect even his enemies had for his unimpeachable veracity and honor.

Raleigh stood up now, quiet and unimpassioned as when examining a witness, to give his own clear, direct, lawyer-like testimony.

He said: "There may be some here to-night to whom the prophecy that was read, and the story of the Advent, are only of historic interest. To such I do not come with the sayings of the prophets, or to repeat the tidings of the shepherds, or to ask any one's credence because the apostles and martyrs and Christians of all times believed. I tell you that which I myself do know. The Holy Spirit has led me to the Christ. If he were only an ethical teacher, if he were not the Son of God, he could not have entered into my life, and transformed it as he has done. My star of hope is far more real to me than the stars outside that lighted my way to this room to-night. I have knelt at his feet and worshiped, and gone on my way rejoicing. I know that through the sacrifice he offered on

Calvary my atonement is made, and I stand before the Father justified, through faith in his only-begotten. The voice that bears witness to this may not be audible to you; but though all the voices in the universe were combined to dispute it, they would be as nothing to that still, small voice within that whispers peace—the witness of the Spirit."

On the Day of Atonement Marion and Cragmore had not been half so surprised at hearing the League benediction intoned by rabbi and choir, as was David when the familiar blessing of the synagogue was repeated in unison by those of another faith:

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

David had heard so much of Methodists that he had expected noisy demonstrations and great exhibitions of emotion. He had found enthusiastic singing and hearty responses of amen during the prayers; but while the prevailing spirit seemed one of intense earnestness, it had the depth and quiet of some great, resistless under-current.

He slipped out of the room after the benediction, fearful of meeting curious glances. A member of the reception committee managed to shake hands with him, but his friends had not discovered his attendance.

Two things followed him persistently. The expression of Dr. Bascom's face, and Hewson Raleigh's emphatic "I know."

He took the last train out to Hillhollow, wishing he had staid away from the League meeting. It haunted him, and made him uncomfortable.

He walked the floor until long after midnight. Even sleep brought him no rest, for in his dreams he was still groping blindly in the dark for something—he knew not what—but something wise men had found long years ago in a starlit manger, earth's "Herzenruhe."

CHAPTER XV.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

IT was Christmas eve, and nearing the time for Bethany to leave the office. She stood, with her wraps on, by one of the windows, waiting for Mr. Edmunds to come back. She had a message to deliver before she could leave, and she expected him momentarily.

In the street below people were hurrying by with their arms full of bundles. She was impatient to be gone, too. There were a great many finishing touches for her to give the tall tree in the drawing-room at home.

She had worked till the last moment at noon, and locked the door regretfully on the gayly-decked room, with its mingled odors of pine boughs and oranges, always so suggestive of Christmas festivities.

While she stood there, she heard steps in the hall.

"O, I thought you were Mr. Edmunds," she exclaimed, as David entered. It was the first time he had been at the office that day. "I have a message for him. Have you seen him anywhere?"

"No," answered David. "I have just come in from Hillhollow. Marta has telegraphed that she is coming home on the night train, so I shall not be able to accept Jack's invitation. She had not expected to come at all during the holidays; but one of the teachers was called home, and she could not resist the temptation to accompany her, although she can only stay until the end of the week."

As Bethany expressed her regrets at Jack's disappointment, David picked up a small package that lay on his desk.

"O, the expressman left that for you a little while ago," she said. "Your Christmas is beginning early."

She turned again to the window, peering out through the dusk, while David lighted the gas-jet over his desk, and proceeded to open the package.

It occurred to her that here was a time, while all the world was turning towards the

Messiah on this anniversary eve of his coming, that she might venture to speak of him. Before she could decide just how to begin, David spoke to her:

"Do you care to look, Miss Hallam? I would like for you to see it."

He held a little silver case towards her, on which a handsome monogram was heavily engraved.

As she touched the spring it flew open, showing an exquisitely painted miniature on ivory.

She gave an involuntary cry of delight.

"What a beautiful girl," she exclaimed. "It is one of the loveliest faces I ever saw." She scrutinized it carefully, studying it with an artist's evident pleasure. Then she looked up with a smile.

"This must be the one Rabbi Barthold spoke to me about," she said. "He said that she was rightly named Esther, for it means star, and her great, dark eyes always made him think of starlight."

"How long ago since he told you that?" asked David in surprise.

"When we first began taking Hebrew lessons," she answered.

"And did he tell you we are bethrothed?"

"Yes."

David felt annoyed. He knew intuitively why his old friend had departed so from his usual scrupulousness regarding a confidence. He had intimated to David, when he had first met Miss Hallam, that she was an unusually fascinating girl, and he feared that their growing friendship might gradually lessen the young man's interest in Esther, whom he saw only at long intervals, as she lived in a distant city.

"I had hoped to have the pleasure of telling you myself," said David.

"I have often wondered what she is like," answered Bethany, "and I am glad to have this opportunity of offering my congratulations. I wish that she lived here that I might make her acquaintance. I do not know when I have seen a face that has captivated me so."

"Thank you," replied David, flushing with pleasure. A tender smile lighted his eyes as he glanced at the miniature again before closing the case. "She will come to Hillhollow in the spring," he added proudly.

They heard Mr. Edmunds's voice in the hall. Bethany held out her hand.

"I shall not see you again until next week, I suppose," she said, "so let me wish you a very happy Christmas."

He kept her hand in his an instant as he repeated her greeting, then, looking earnestly down into the upturned face, added gently in Hebrew, the old benediction—"Peace be upon you."

It was quite dark when she stepped out into the streets. She thought of David and Esther all the way home.

At first she thought of them with a tender smile curving her lips, as she entered unselfishly into the happiness of the little romance she had discovered.

Then she thought of them with tears in her eyes and a chill in her heart, as some little waif might stand shivering on the outside of a window, looking in on a happy scene, whose warmth and comfort he could not share. The joy of her own betrothal, and the desolation that ended it, surged back over her so overwhelmingly that she was in no mood for merry-making when she reached home.

She longed to slip quietly away to her own room, and spend the evening in the dark with

her memories. She had to wait a moment on the threshold before she could summon strength enough to go in cheerfully.

Mrs. Marion and Lois were in the dining-room helping the sisters decorate the long table, where the children were to be served with supper immediately on their arrival.

"Frank and Jack have gone out in a sleigh to gather them up," said Mrs. Marion. "They 'll soon be here, so you 'll not have much time to dress."

"All right," responded Bethany, "I 'll go in a minute. Mr. Herschel can't come, so you may as well take off one plate."

"But George Cragmore can," said Miss Caroline, pausing on her way to the kitchen. "I asked him this morning, and forgot to say anything about it."

Then she trotted out for a cake-knife, blissfully unconscious of the grimace Bethany made behind her back.

"O dear!" she exclaimed to Lois, "Miss Caroline means all right, but she is a born match-maker. She has taken a violent fancy to Mr. Cragmore, and wants me to do the same. She thinks she is so very deep, and so very wary in

the way she lays her plans, that I 'll never suspect; but the dear old soul is as transparent as a window-pane. I can see every move she makes."

"What about Mr. Cragmore?" asked Lois. "Is he conscious of her efforts in his behalf?"

"O no. He thinks that she is a dear, motherly old lady, and is always paying her some flattering attention. It is well worth his while, for she makes him perfectly at home here, keeps his pockets full of goodies, as if he were an overgrown boy (which he is in some respects), and treats him with the consideration due a bishop. She is always going out to Clarke Street to hear him preach, and quoting his sermons to him afterwards. There he is now!" she exclaimed, as two short rings and one long one were given the front door-bell.

"So he even has his especial signals," laughed Lois. "He must be on a very familiar footing, indeed."

"He got into that habit when he first started to calling by to take me up to the Hebrew class," she explained. "Miss Caroline encouraged him in it."

Just then Miss Caroline came hurrying through the room to receive him.

"Bethany, dear," she said in an excited stage whisper, "you 'd better run up the back stairs. And do put on your best dress, and a rose in your hair, just to please me. Now, won't you?"

Bethany and Lois looked at each other and laughed.

"I 'd like to shock her by going in just as I am," said Bethany; "but as it 's Christmas-time I suppose I must be good and please everybody."

It was not long before a great stamping of many snowy little feet announced the arrival of the Christmas guests.

They came into the house with such rosy, happy faces, that no one thought of the patched clothes and ragged shoes.

"Dear hearts, I wish we could have a hundred instead of ten," sighed Miss Harriet, as she helped seat them at the table. "They look as though they never once had enough to eat in all their little lives."

"They shall have it now," declared Miss Caroline heartily, "if George Cragmore does n't

keep them laughing so hard they can't eat. Just hear the man!"

She had never seen him in such a gay humor, or heard him tell such irresistibly funny stories as the ones he brought out for the entertainment of these poor little guests, who had never known anything but the depressing poverty of the most wretched homes.

Mr. Marion was the good St. Nicholas who had found them, and spirited them away to this enchanted land; but Cragmore was the Aladdin who rubbed his lamp until their eyes were dazzled by the wonderful scenes he conjured up for them.

When the dinner was over, and everything had been taken off the table but the flowers and candles and bonbon dishes, he lifted the smallest child of all from her high chair, and took her on his knee.

With his arms around her, he began to tell the story of the first Christmas. His voice was very deep and sweet, and he told it so well one could almost see the dark, silent plains and the white sheep huddled together, and the shepherds keeping watch by night.

One by one the children slipped down from their chairs, and crowded closer around him.

He had never preached before to such a breathless audience, and he had never put into his sermons such gentleness and pathos and power.

He was thinking of their poor, neglected lives, and how much they needed the love of One who could sympathize to the utmost, because he was born among the lowly, and "was despised and rejected of men." When he had finished, the tears stood in his eyes with the intensity of his feeling, and the children were very quiet.

The little girl on his lap drew a long breath. Then she smiled up in his face, and, putting her arm around his neck, leaned her head against him.

There was a bugle-call from the library, and Jack led the children away to listen to an orchestra composed of boys from the League, who had volunteered their services for the occasion.

While they were playing some old carols, Miss Caroline called Mr. Cragmore aside. "I 've sent Bethany to light the candles on the tree in

the drawing-room," she said. "May be you can help her."

Lois heard the whisper, and his hearty response, "May the saints bless you for that now!" She hurried into the hall to intercept Bethany.

"Ah ha, my lady," she said teasingly, "you need n't be putting everything off onto poor Aunt Caroline. I 've just now discovered that she is only somebody's cat's-paw."

Bethany was irritated. She had been greatly touched by the winning tenderness of Cragmore's manner with the children. If there had been no memory of a past love in her life, she could have found in this man all the qualities that would inspire the deepest affection; but with that memory always present, she resented the slightest word that hinted of his interest in her.

She made Lois go with her to light the tapers, and that mischief-loving girl thoroughly enjoyed forestalling the little private interview Miss Caroline had planned for her protege.

It was still early in the evening, while the children were romping around the dismantled tree, that Cragmore announced his intention of leaving.

"I promised to talk at a Hebrew mission to-night," he explained, in answer to the remonstrances that greeted him on all sides.

"By the way," he exclaimed, "I intended to tell you about that, and I must stay a moment longer to do it."

He hung his overcoat on the back of a tall chair, and folded his arms across it.

"The other day I made the acquaintance of a Russian Jew, Sigmund Ragolsky. He has a remarkable history. He married an English Jewess, was a rabbi in Glasgow for a long time, and is now a Baptist preacher, converted after a fourteen years' struggle against a growing belief in the truth of Christianity. The story of his life sounds like a romance. He was so strictly orthodox that he would not strike a match on the Sabbath. He would have starved before he would have touched food that had not been prepared according to ritual. He is here for the purpose of establishing a Hebrew mission. You should see the people who come to hear him. They are nearly all from that poor class in the tenement district. One can hardly believe they belong to the same race with Rabbi Barthold and his cultured friends. Ragolsky,

though, is a scholar, and I should like to hear the two men debate. He says the Reform Jews are no Jews at all—that they are the hardest people in the world to convert, because they look for no Messiah, accept only the Scripture that suits them, and are so well satisfied with themselves that they feel no need of any mediator between them and eternal holiness. They feel fully equal to the task of making their own atonement. Rabbi Barthold says that the orthodox are narrow fanatics, and that the majority of them live two lives—one towards God, of slavish religious observances; the other towards man, of sharp practices and double-dealing. I want you to hear Ragolsky preach some night. I 'll tell you his story some other time."

"Tell me this much now," said Bethany, as he picked up his overcoat again; "did he have to give up his family as Mr. Lessing did?"

"No, indeed. Happily his wife and children were converted also. He had two rich brothers-in-law in Cape Colony, Africa, who cut them off without a shilling, but he is not grieving over that, I can assure you. O, he is so full of his purpose, and is such a happy Christian! If we were all as constantly about the Master's busi-

ness as he is, the millennium would soon be here."

Afterward, when the children had been taken home, and the feast and the tree, and the people who gave them, were only blissful memories in their happy little hearts, Bethany stood by the window in her room, holding aside the curtain.

Everything outside was covered with snow. She was thinking of Ragolsky and Lessing, and wondering which of the two fates would be David Herschel's, if he should ever become a Christian.

Would Esther's love for her people be stronger than her love for him?

She knew how tenaciously the women of Israel cling to their faith, yet she felt that it was no ordinary bond that held these two together.

Looking up beyond the starlighted heavens, Bethany whispered a very heartfelt prayer for David and the beautiful, dark-eyed girl who was to be his bride; and like an answering omen of good, over the white roofs of the city came the joyful clangor of the Christmas chimes.

CHAPTER XVI.

A "WATCH-NIGHT" CONSECRATION.

THE office work for the old year was all done. Mr. Edmunds had locked his desk and gone home. David would soon follow. He had only some private correspondence to finish.

Bethany sat nervously assorting the letters in the different pigeon-holes of her desk. Ninety-five was slipping out into the eternities. It had brought her a prayed-for opportunity; it was carrying away a far different record from the one she had planned. She felt that she could not bear to have it go in that way, yet an unaccountable reticence sealed her lips.

David had been in the office very little during the past week, only long enough to get his mail. This afternoon he had a worried, preoccupied look that made it all the harder for Bethany to say what was trembling on her lips.

She heard him slipping the letter into the

envelope. He would be gone in just another moment. Now he was putting on his overcoat. O, she must say something! Her heart beat violently, and her face grew hot. She shut her eyes an instant, and sent up a swift, despairing appeal for help.

David strolled into the room with his hat in his hand, and stood beside her table.

"Well, the old year is about over, Miss Hallam," he said, gravely. "It has brought me a great many unexpected experiences, but the most unexpected of all is the one that led to our acquaintance. In wishing you a happy new year, I want to tell you what a pleasure your friendship has been to me in the old."

Bethany found sudden speech as she took the proffered hand.

"And I want to tell you, Mr. Herschel, that I have not only been wishing, but praying earnestly, that in this new year you may find the greatest happiness earth holds—the peace that comes in accepting Christ as a Savior."

He turned from her abruptly, and, with his hands thrust in his overcoat pockets, began pacing up and down the room with quick, excited strides.

"You, too!" he cried desperately. "I seem to be pursued. Every way I turn, the same thing is thrust at me. For weeks I have been fighting against it—O, longer than that—since I first talked to Lessing. Then there was Dr. Trent's death, and that nurse's prayer, and the League meeting Frank Marion persuaded me into attending. Cragmore has talked to me so often, too. I can answer arguments, but I can't answer such lives and faith as theirs. Yesterday morning I had a letter from Lee—little Lee Trent—thanking me for a book I had sent him, and even that child had something to say. He told me about his conversion. Last night curiosity led me down town to hear a Russian Jew preach to a lot of rough people in an old warehouse by the river. His text was Pilate's question, 'What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?' It was n't a sermon. There was n't a single argument in it. It was just a tragically-told story of the Nazarene's trial and death sentence—but he made it such a personal matter. All last night, and all day to-day those words have tormented me beyond endurance, 'What shall I do? What shall I do with this Jesus called Christ!' "

He kept on restlessly pacing back and forth in silence. Then he broke out again:

"I saw a man converted, as you call it, down there last night. He had been a rough, blasphemous drunkard that I have seen in the police courts many a time. I saw him fall on his knees at the altar, groaning for mercy, and I saw him, when he stood up after a while, with a face like a different creature's, all transformed by a great joy, crying out that he had been pardoned for Christ's sake. I just stood and looked at him, and wondered which of us is nearer the truth. If I am right, what a poor, deluded fool he is! But if he is right, good God—"

He stopped abruptly.

"Mr. Herschel," said Bethany, slowly, "if you were convinced that, by going on some certain pilgrimage, you could find Truth, but that the finding would shatter your belief in the creed you cling to now, would you undertake the journey? Which is stronger in you, the love for the faith of your fathers, or an honest desire for Truth, regardless of long-cherished opinion?"

For a moment there was no answer. Then he threw back his shoulders resolutely.

"I would take the journey," he said, with

decision. "If I am wrong I want to know it." Bethany slipped a little Testament out of one of the pigeon-holes, and handed it to him, opened at the place where the answer to Thomas was heavily underscored:

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way and the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

"Follow that path," she said, simply. "The door has never been opened to you, because you have never knocked. You have no personal knowledge of Christ, because you have never sought for it. He has never revealed himself to you, because you have never asked him to do so."

He turned to her impatiently.

"Could you honestly pray to Confucius?" he asked; "or Isaiah, or Elijah, or John the Baptist? This Jewish teacher is no more to me than any other man who has taught and died. How can I pray to him, then?"

Bethany fingered the leaves of her little Testament, her heart fluttering nervously.

"I wish you would take this and read it," she said. "It would answer you far better than I can."

"I have read it," he replied, "a number of years ago. I could see nothing in it."

"O, but you read it simply as a critic," she answered. "See!" she cried eagerly, turning the leaves to find another place she had marked: "Paul wrote this about the children of Israel: 'Their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil' (the one told about in Exodus, you know) 'untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.' "

"Where does it say that?" he asked, incredulously. He took the book, and turning back to the first of the chapter, commenced to read.

The great bell in the court-house tower began clanging six.

"I must go," he said; "but I 'll take this with me and look through it another time."

"I wish you would come to the watch-meeting to-night," she said, wistfully. "It is from ten until midnight. All the Leagues in the city meet at Garrison Avenue."

He slipped the book in his pocket, and buttoned up his overcoat. A sudden reserve of manner seemed to envelop him at the same time.

"No, thank you," he answered, drawing on his gloves. "I have an informal invitation from some friends in Hillhollow to dance the old year out and the new year in."

His tone seemed so flippant after the recent depth of feeling he had betrayed, that it jarred on Bethany's earnest mood like a discord. He moved toward the door.

"No matter where you may be," she said as he opened it, "I shall be praying for you."

After he had gone, Bethany still sat at her desk, mechanically assorting the letters. She was so absorbed in her thoughts that she had quite forgotten it was time to go home.

The door opened, and Frank Marion came in. He was followed by Cragmore, who was going home with him to dinner.

"All alone?" asked Mr. Marion in surprise. "Where 's David? We dropped in to invite him around to the watch-meeting to-night."

"He has just gone," answered Bethany. "I asked him, but he declined on account of a pre-

vious engagement. O, Cousin Frank," she exclaimed, "I do believe he is almost convinced of the truth of Christianity!"

She repeated the conversation that had just taken place.

"He has been fighting against that conviction for some time," answered Mr. Marion. "I had a talk with him last week."

"What do you suppose Rabbi Barthold would say if Mr. Herschel should become a Christian?" asked Bethany.

"Ah, I asked the old gentleman that very question yesterday," exclaimed Mr. Cragmore. "It astounded him at first. I could see that the mere thought of such apostasy in one he loves as dearly as his young David, wounded him sorely. O, it grieved him to the heart! But he is a noble soul, broad-minded and generous. He did not answer for a moment, and when he finally spoke I could see what an effort the words cost him:

" 'David is a child no longer,' he said, slowly. 'He has a right to choose for himself. I would rather read the rites of burial over his dead body than to see him cut loose from the faith in which I have so carefully trained him; but no matter

what course he pursues, I am sure of one thing, his absolute honesty of purpose. Whatever he does, will be from a deep conviction of right. I, who was denounced and misunderstood in my youth because I cast aside the weight of orthodoxy that bound me down spiritually, should be the last one to condemn the same independence of thought in others.' "

"Herschel would have less opposition to contend with than any Jew I know," remarked Mr. Marion.

"That little sister of his would be rather pleased than otherwise, and, I think, would soon follow his example."

Bethany thought of Esther, but said nothing.

"We 'll make it a subject of prayer to-night," said Cragmore, who had been appointed to lead the meeting.

"Yes," answered Marion, clapping his friend on the shoulder. Then he quoted emphatically: " 'And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.' "

"Let 's ask him right now!" cried Cragmore, in his impetuous way.

He slipped the bolt in the door, and kneeling

beside David's desk, began praying for his absent friend as he would have pleaded for his life. Then Marion followed with the same unfaltering earnestness, and after his voice ceased, Bethany took up the petition.

"Nobody need tell me that those prayers are not heard," exclaimed Marion, triumphantly, as he arose from his knees. "I know better. Come, Bethany; if you are ready to go, we will walk as far as the avenue with you."

As they went down-stairs together, he kept singing softly under his breath, "Blessed be the name, blessed be the name of the Lord!"

By ten o'clock the League-room of the Garrison Avenue Church was crowded.

George Cragmore had prepared a carefully-studied address for the occasion; but during the half hour of the song service preceding it, while he studied the faces of his audience, his heart began to be strangely burdened for David and his people. He covered his eyes with his hand a moment, and sent up a swift prayer for guidance, before he arose to speak.

"My friends," he said in his deep, musical voice, "I had thought to talk to you to-night of 'spiritual growth,' but just now, as I have been

sitting here, God had put another message into my mouth. We are all children of one Father who have met in this room, and for that reason you will bear with me now for the strangeness of the questions I shall ask, and the seeming harshness of my words. This is a time for honest self-examination. I should like to know how many, during the year just gone, have contributed in any way to the support of Home and Foreign Missions?"

Every one in the room arose.

"How many have tried, by prayer, daily influence, and direct appeal, to bring some one to Christ?"

Again every one arose.

"How many of you, during the past year, have spoken to a Jew about your Savior, or in any way evinced to any one of them a personal interest in the salvation of that race?"

Looks of surprise were exchanged among the Leaguers, and many smiled at the question. Only two arose, Mr. Marion and Bethany Hallam.

When they had taken their seats again there was a moment of intense silence. The earnest solemnity of the minister was felt by every one

present. They waited almost breathlessly for what was coming.

"There is a young Jew in this city to-night whose heart is turning lovingly towards your Savior and mine. I have come to ask your prayers in his behalf, that the stumbling-blocks in his way may be removed. But it is not for him alone my soul is burdened. I seem to hear Isaiah's voice crying out to me, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.' And then I seem to hear another voice that through the thunderings of Sinai proclaims, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness.' Ah! the Christian Church has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. It must read a terrible handwriting on the wall in the fact that Israel's eyes have not been opened to the fulfillment of prophecy. For had she seen Christ in the daily life of every follower since he was first preached in that little Church at Antioch, we would have had a race of Sauls turned Pauls! We are Christ's witnesses to all men. Do all men see Christ in us, or only

a false, misleading image of him? He cherished no racial prejudices. He turned away from no man with a look of scorn, or a cold shrug of indifference. He drew no line across which his sympathies and love and helping hands should not reach. When we do these things, are we not bearing false witness to the character of him whose name we have assumed, and the emblem of whose cross we wear? I can not believe that any of us here have been willfully neglectful of this corner of the Lord's vineyard. It must be because your hearts and hands were full of other interests that you have been indifferent to this."

Then he told them of Lessing and Ragolsky and David, and called on them to pray that his friend might find the light he was seeking. A dozen earnest prayers were offered in quick succession, and every heart went out in sympathy to this young Jew, whom they longed to see happy in the consciousness of a personal Savior.

David had not gone out to Hillhollow. He dined at the restaurant, and was just starting leisurely down to the depot when he found that his watch told the same time as when he had

looked at it an hour before. It must have been stopped even some time before that. At any rate it had made him too late for the train. The next one would not leave till nine o'clock. He stood on a corner debating how to pass the time, and finally concluded to go back to the office for a magazine he had borrowed from Rabbi Barthold, and take it home to him.

His steps echoed strangely through the deserted hall as he climbed the stairs to the office. He lighted the gas, and sat down to look through the papers on his desk for the magazine. But when he had found it, he still sat there idly, drumming with his fingers on the rounds of his chair.

After awhile he took Bethany's Testament out of his pocket, and began to read. It was marked heavily with many marginal notes and underscored passages, that he examined with a great deal of curiosity. Beginning with Matthew's account of the wise men's search, he read steadily on through the four Gospels, past Acts, and through some of Paul's epistles. It was after ten by the office clock when he finished the letter to the Hebrews.

He put the book down with a groan, and,

folding his arms on the desk, wearily laid his head on them.

Just then Bethany's parting words echoed in his ears, "No matter where you may be, I shall be praying for you."

It had irritated him at the moment. Now there was comfort in the thought that she might be interceding in his behalf. He loved the faith of his fathers. He was proud of every drop of Israelitish blood that coursed through his veins. He felt that nothing could induce him to renounce Judaism—nothing! Yet his heart went out lovingly toward the Christ that had been so wonderfully revealed to him as he read.

The conviction was slowly forcing itself on his mind that in accepting him he would not be giving up Judaism, that he would only be accepting the Messiah long promised to his own people—only believing fulfilled prophecy.

He wanted him so—this Christ who seemed able to satisfy every longing of his heart, which just now was 'hungering and thirsting after righteousness;' this Christ who had so loved the world that he had given himself a willing sacrifice to make propitiation for its sins—for his—David Herschel's sins.

The old questions of the Trinity and the Incarnation came back to perplex him, and he put them resolutely away, remembering the words that Bethany had quoted, that when Israel should turn to the Lord, the veil should be taken from its heart.

Suddenly he started to his feet, and with his hands clasped above his head, cried out: "O, Thou Eternal, take away the veil! Show me Christ! I will give up anything—everything that stands in the way of my accepting him, if thou wilt but make him manifest!"

He threw himself on his knees in an agony of supplication, and then rising, walked the floor. Time and again he knelt to pray, and again rose in despair to pace back and forth.

He hardly knew what to expect, but Paul's conversion had been attended by such miraculous manifestations that he felt that some great revelation must certainly be made to him.

Opening the little Testament at random, he saw the words, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

"I do believe it," he said aloud. "And I will confess it the first opportunity I have. Yes, I will go right now and tell Uncle Ezra—no matter what it may cause him to say to me."

He looked at the clock again. The old year was almost gone. It was nearly midnight. Rabbi Barthold would be asleep. Then he remembered the watch-night service Bethany had asked him to attend. Cragmore and Marion would be there. He would go and tell them.

He started rapidly down the street, saying to himself: "How queer this seems! Here am I, a Jew, on my way to confess before men that I believe a Galilean peasant is the Son of God. I don't understand the mystery of it, but I do believe in some way the promised atonement has been made, and that it avails for me."

He clung to that hope all the way down to the Church. It was growing stronger every step.

Bethany had risen to take her place at the piano at the announcement of another hymn, when the door opened and David Herschel stood in their midst. Not even glancing at the startled members of the League, he walked across the

room and held out one hand to Cragmore and the other to Marion. His voice thrilled his listeners with its intensity of purpose.

"I have come to confess before you the belief that your Jesus is the Christ, and that through him I shall be saved."

Then a look of happy wonderment shone in his face, as the dawning consciousness of his acceptance became clearer to him.

"Why, I am saved! Now!" he cried in joyful surprise.

Glad tears sprang to many eyes, and only one exclamation could express the depth of Frank Marion's gratitude—an old-fashioned shout of "Glory to God!" Yes, an old, old fashion—for it came in when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

"O, I must tell the whole world!" cried David.

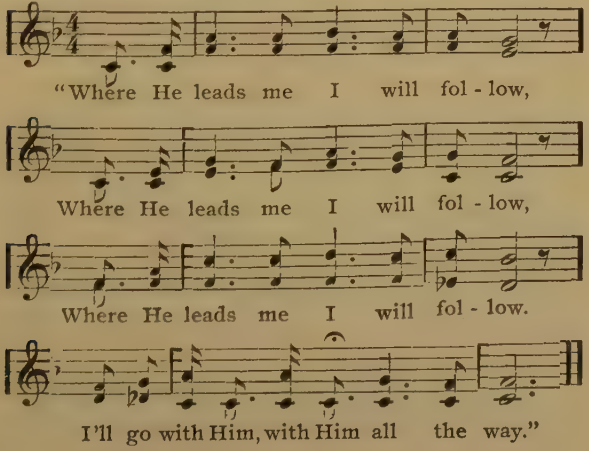
"Come!" exclaimed Cragmore, turning to those around him, and laying his hand on David's shoulder; "here is another Saul turned Paul. Who such missionaries of the cross as these redeemed sons of Abraham? Leagued with such an Israel, we could soon tell all the world. Who will join the alliance?"

In answer they came crowding around David, with warm hand-clasps and sympathetic words, till the bells all over the city began tolling the hour of midnight.

At a word from Cragmore they knelt in the final prayer of consecration.

There was a deep silence. Then the leader's voice began:

"The untried paths of the new year stretch out into unknown distances. But trusting in an Allwise Father, in a grace-giving Christ, and the sustaining presence of the Holy Spirit, how many will sing with me:


"Where He leads me I will fol - low,
Where He leads me I will fol - low,
Where He leads me I will fol - low.
I'll go with Him, with Him all the way."

The melody arose, sweet and subdued, as every voice covenanted with his.

"But some of us may have planned out certain paths for our own feet, that lead alluringly to ease and approbation. Think! God may call us into obscure bypaths, into ways that lead to no earthly recompense, to lowly service and unrequited toil. Can we still sing it? Let us wait. Let us consider and be very sure."

In the prayerful silence, David thought of his profession and the hopes of the great success that it was his ambition to attain. Could he give it up, and spend his life in an unappreciated ministry to his people? He wavered. But just then he had a vision of the Christ. He seemed to see a footsore, tired man, holding out his hands in blessing to the motley crowds that thronged him; and again he saw the same patient form stumbling wearily along under a heavy beam of wood, scourged, mocked, spit upon, nailed to the cross, for—him!

David shuddered, and he took up the refrain: "I 'll go with Him, with Him, all the way."

"It may be that, so far as ambition and personal plans are concerned, we are willing to put

ourselves entirely in God's hands; but suppose he should call for our hearts' best beloved, are we willing to make of this hour a Mount Moriah, on which we sacrifice our Isaacs—our all? Do we consecrate ourselves entirely? Will we go with him all the way, no matter through what dark Gethsemane he may see best to lead us?"

Again David wavered as Esther's beautiful face came before him.

"O God! anything but that!" he cried out passionately.

Cragmore felt him trembling, and, reaching out, clasped his hand, and prayed silently that strength might be given him to make the consecration complete.

"I 'll go with Him, with Him, all the way!"

David's voice sung it unfalteringly. When they arose the tears were streaming down his cheeks, but a great light was in his face, and a great peace in his heart. The Christ had been revealed to him. A new life and a new year had been born together.

. . . . . .

No, the story is not done, but the rest of it can not be written until it has first been lived.

In God's good time the shuttles of his purposes shall weave these life-webs to the finish. Some threads may cross and twine, some be widely parted, and some be snapped asunder. Who can tell? The new year has only begun.

But we know that all things work together for good to those who give themselves into the eternal keeping, and—"God 's in his heaven."

SILENT KEYS.

NCE, in a shadowy old cathedral, a young girl sat at the great organ, playing over and over a simple melody for a group of children to sing. They were rehearsing the parts they were to take in the Christmas choruses.

It was not long before every voice had caught the sweet old tune of "Joy to the World," and as their little feet pattered down the solemn aisles, the song was carried with them to the work and play of the streets outside.

As the girl turned to follow, she found the old white-haired organist, a master-musician, standing beside her.

"Why did you not strike all the keys, little sister?" he asked. "You have left silent some of the sweetest and deepest. Listen! This is what you should have put into your song."

As he spoke, his powerful hands touched the key-board, till the great cathedral seemed to

tremble with the mighty symphony that filled it—"Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

High, sweet notes, like the matin-songs of sky-larks, fluttered away from his touch, and went winging their flight—up and up—beyond all mortal hearing. Down the deep, full chords and majestic octaves rolled the triumphal gladness. Every key seemed to find a voice, as the hands of the old musician swept through the variations of "Antioch."

Tears filled the young girl's eyes, and when he had finished she said sadly: "Ah, only a master-hand could do that—bring out the varied tones of those silent keys, and yet through it all keep the thread of the song clear and unbroken. All those divine harmonies were in my soul as I played, yet had I tried to give expression to them, I might have wandered away from the simple motif that I would have the children remember always. In trying to span those fuller chords you strike so easily, or in reaching always for the highest notes, I would have failed to impress them with the part they are to take in the choruses, and they would not have gone out as they did just now, singing their joy to the world."

Maybe some such master may turn the pages of this story, and feel the same impatience at its incompleteness. Here in this place he would have added, with strong touches, many a convincing argument. There he would have spoken with the voice of a sage or prophet, and he may turn away, saying: "Why did you not strike all the keys, little sister? You have left silent some of the sweetest and deepest."

The answer is the same. Only a master-hand can sweep the gamut of history and human weaknesses and dogmas and creeds, touch the discordant elements of controversy and criticism in all their variations, and at the same time keep the simple theme constantly throbbing through them, so strong and full and clear it can never be forgotten.

The purpose of this story is accomplished if it has only attracted the attention of the League to a neglected duty, and struck a higher key-note of endeavor. But the League must not stop with that.

There is only one song that will ever bring universal joy to this old, tear-blinded world, and that is that the Lord is come, and that he is risen indeed in the lives of his followers.

True, the veriest child may lisp it; but the League should not be content simply to do that. It should be the master-musician, so familiar with the great complexity of human doubts and longings, that it will know just what chord to touch in every heart it is striving to help.

Go back to the days of the dispersion, and follow this Ishmael through his almost limitless desert of persecution—his hand against every man because every man's hand was against him.

Put yourself in his place until your vision grows broad and your sympathy deep. Chafe against his limitations. Stumble over his obstacles, and in so doing learn where best to place the stepping-stones.

Dig down through the strata of tradition, below all the manifold ceremonies of his formal worship, until you come to the bed-rock of principle underlying them.

When you have thus studied Judaism, its prophets, its priesthood, its patriots—when you have traced its sinuous path from Abraham's tent to the Temple gates, and then followed its diverging lines on into almost every hamlet of both hemispheres, you will have learned some-

thing more than the history of Judaism. You will have read the story of the whole race of Adam, and you will have fitted yourself far better to serve humanity.

Christ reached his hearers through his intimate knowledge of them. He never talked to shepherds of fishing-nets, nor to vine-dressers of flocks. He gave the same water of life to the woman at Jacob's well that he bestowed on the ruler who came to him by night. Yet how differently he presented it to the ignorant Samaritan and the learned Nicodemus.

To this end, then, study these creeds and systems; for instance, the unity of God, clung to alike by the Hebrew persistently reiterating his Shemang, and the Moslem crying "God is God, and Mohammed is his prophet!"

Follow this belief in the Unity, as it goes deeply channeling its way through centuries of Semitic thought, until it enters the very life-blood. You can trace its influence even down into the early Christian Church, in the hot disputes of Arius and his followers, at the Council of Nicea.

Not until you comprehend how idolatrous

the worship of the Trinity seems to a Jew, can you understand what a stumbling-block lies between him and the acceptance of his Messiah.

You will find this study of Judaism reaching out like a banyan-tree, striking root and branching again and again in so many different places that it seems that it must certainly, by some one of its manifold ramifications, shadow every great problem and people.

In the first conception of this story it was purposed to place considerable emphasis on a number of things that have been left untouched, especially the colonization schemes of the philanthropic Barons Hirsch and De Rothschild, and the prophecies concerning the return of the Jews to Palestine.

But prophecy, while always a most interesting and profitable subject for research and study, leads into an unmapped country of speculation. Many an enthusiast, not recognizing that on God's great calendar a thousand years are but as a day, has attempted to solve the mysteries of Revelations by the same numerical system with which he calculates his assets and liabilities. As we examine this subject, we must not forget the vast difference between our finite

yardsticks, and the reed of the angel who measured the city.

God grant that, as the tree thrown into the stream of Marah changed its bitter waters into wholesome, life-giving sweetness, so this study of Israel, earnestly and honestly pursued, may turn all bitterness of prejudice into the broad, sweet spirit of true brotherhood!